THE SOUTHERN REVIEW

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RURAL SOCIOLOGY

Devoted to Scientific Study of Rural Life

Rural Sociology is published by the Section on Rural Sociology of the American Sociological Society. Louisiana State University is its Guarantor.

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Exceptions to the Uniformity of a Lower Natural Increase of the Upper Classes. By Corrado Gini.

Historical Background of California Farm Labor. By Paul S. Taylor and Tom Vasey.

Rural Families on Relief. By T. C. McCormick.

Social Attitudes of the Czechoslovakian Peasant. By Antonin Obrdlik.

Rural Educational Institutions and Social Lag. By Roland R. Renne.

Some Characteristics of Rural Families on Relief in New York. By W. A. Anderson.

Some Observations on Oklahoma Population Movements Since 1930. By Robert T. McMillan.

Forms and Problems of Culture Integration and Methods of Their Study. Part II. By Pitirim A. Sorokin.

Current Bulletins. By Charles P. Loomis.

Book Reviews.

News Notes and Announcements.

Books Received.

Manuscripts, communications for the editors, and business correspondence should be addressed to T. Lynn Smith, Managing Editor, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

The subscription price is $2.00 per year; single copies, 50 cents each.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

HERBERT AGAR, who has contributed to two previous numbers of *The Southern Review,* is one of the editors of the Louisville *Courier Journal.* Readers familiar with his *Land of the Free* will recognize the application of the views expressed in that book to the subject of our present-day political machinery. Mr. Agar attended the Republican and Democratic conventions of this year.

EDWIN BORCHARD is professor of international law in the Yale University Law School and has made a distinguished contribution to the interpretation of the part the United States should take in world affairs. Interest in this subject, particularly that of a policy of neutrality, has been intensified of course by recent developments in Europe; and this interest is also reflected in the letters, appearing in the present issue, by Quincy Wright and Newton D. Baker, on the subject of O. W. Riegel's recent article, "The Pattern of the Unneutral Diplomat." Mr. Wright is professor of political science in the University of Chicago. Mr. Baker was Secretary of War in Wilson's Cabinet.

HENRY BAMFORD PARKES' essay on John Dewey is one of a series of essays on modern philosophers. Earlier members of this series are an essay on

TRANSITION

Eugene Jolas, *editor* James Johnson Sweeney, *associate editor*

State a logical proposition and the most commonplace mind can complete it. Suggestion is richest to the richest and so grows unpopular with the democracy like this.
—W. B. Yeats: *The Death of Synge*

THE FALL ISSUE, No. 25, due on the stands early September, will contain work by

Hugo Ball, Harry Brown, Denis Devlin, Richard Huelsenbeck, Franz Kafka, Norman McCaig, Thomas Newman, Dylan Thomas, Charles Tracy, Oliver Wells, Christopher Young, Alfonso Reyes, and others, as well as the English text of a discussion between Aragon, Le Corbusier and Leger on "Realism".

In keeping with TRANSITION'S emphasis on developments in fields of extra-literary expression, the Fall issue will also contain the score of an unpublished scherzo by Henry Cowell, an article by S. Giedion on the "Recent Bridges by Maillart", stills from "Redes" directed by Paul Strand, as well as reproductions of work by Brancusi, Domela, Klee, Matisse, Moholy-Nagy, Mondrian, Matthew Brady, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Francis Bruguiere and others.

The cover is designed especially for TRANSITION by Joan Miro.

●

THE SUMMER ISSUE, No. 24, contained work by

James Agee, Wayne Andrews, Samuel Beckett, Leon Bloy, Mariel Jean-Bruhnes Delamarre, Richard Eberhart, Martha Champion Huot, Georges Pelorson, Kurt Schwitters, Charles Tracy, Edgar Varese, George Whitsett, and reproductions of work by Arp, Biederman, Calder, Giacometti, Malevich, Picasso, Rouault and Paul Nelson. The cover was designed especially for TRANSITION by Fernand Leger.

●

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TRANSITION

113 West 42nd Street, New York City

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William James (*The Hound and Horn,* 1933), on Bergson (*Scrutiny,* 1936), and on Nietzsche (*The Criterion,* 1936). Readers of Mr. Parkes' analysis of Mr. Dewey's position will be interested in relating it to Mr. Dewey's study of Bertrand Russell in the last issue of *The Southern Review.*

VIRGINIUS DABNEY is an editorial writer on the Richmond *Times-Dispatch,* and frequently contributes articles on contemporary problems of the South to various magazines and newspapers. Mr. Dabney is the author of *Liberalism in the South,* and has been prominently identified with the fight for social legislation in this section.

S. S. FIELD, who lives in New Orleans, is the author of "Goodbye to Cap'm John," a story which appeared in *The Southern Review* in the Winter issue, 1936. His first published story, published last year, was reprinted by Edward O'Brien in his collection of the best stories of 1936.

MANSON RADFORD, who has previously contributed to *The Southern Review, The New Republic,* and *The American Review,* is managing editor of *New America: A Magazine for the Small Property Holders,* the first issue of which will appear this winter. "Wm. Crane" is his first published story.

LOUIS MOREAU, a native of Louisiana, is an undergraduate at Louisiana State University. "The Face" is his first published story.

RAYMOND DANNENBAUM has contributed verse to *The Southwest Review, The Virginia Quarterly Review,* and *The Southern Review.* "Silence" is his first published story.

THE JOURNAL *of* SOUTHERN HISTORY

A quarterly review devoted to the encouragement and promotion of interest and research in the history of the South.

The *Journal of Southern History* is the official organ of the Southern Historical Association.

The contents of the November, 1936, issue:

The Advance of Methodism into the Lower Southwest. By Walter B. Posey.

Cincinnati's Reputation During the Civil War. By Charles R. Wilson.

Legal System of the Confederate States. By William M. Robinson, Jr.

Andrew Jackson's Rhea Letter Hoax. By Richard R. Stenberg.

Walter Lynwood Fleming, Historian of Reconstruction. By Fletcher M. Green.

Book Reviews.

Historical News and Notices.

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For membership in the Association ($3.00 per year, including a subscription to the Journal): Fletcher M. Green, Secretary-Treasurer, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

(continued from page vii)

FREDRICK L. SCHUMAN, a member of the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago, has made a special study of post-War German and Russian political development. Readers of his present article will recall his essay in the Summer issue of this magazine, in which he reviewed four books dealing with Hitler and German National Socialism.

R. P. BLACKMUR is the author of numerous critical essays. A collection of these appeared last year under the title, *The Double Agent*. The subject of Mr. Blackmur's present discussion, the function of magic in the poetry of W. B. Yeats, is another aspect of the general problem of the nature of poetic myth, a subject which has engaged other critics in the pages of *The Southern Review*.

ALLEN TATE, who has contributed frequently to *The Southern Review*, discusses in his present article some of the issues raised by Kenneth Burke's "Symbolic War," which appeared in the last issue of *The Southern Review*. Readers of this article may be interested in relating Mr. Tate's discussion to his "Three Types of Poetry" (in *Reactionary Essays*) and also to Mr. Burke's recent volumes, *Counterstatement* and *Permanence and Change*.

RANDALL JARRELL, whose present group of poems was awarded *The Southern Review* Poetry Prize (see page xiii), has contributed verse and criticism to various periodicals.

CRANE BRINTON is professor of history at Harvard University and is editor of *The American Oxonian*. He is the author of *The Political Ideas of the English Romanticists* and of *The Jacobins: An Essay in the New History*. He contributed a review of *Who Owns America?* to the last issue of this magazine.

POETRY

A MAGAZINE OF VERSE

announces the following publications of special interest in its current and future numbers:

AN ENGLISH NUMBER
Edited by W. H. Auden and Michael Roberts.
Presenting the latest work in poetry and poetic criticism by the younger English writers.

A SOCIAL POETS NUMBER
Edited by Horace Gregory.
Presenting the younger American poets of social and proletarian interests, and their critical standards.

AN ANNIVERSARY NUMBER
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Observing the twenty-fourth birthday of POETRY, "the original and most important poetry magazine of modern America," which has been published over a longer space of time than any other journal devoted to the art in the English language.

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It has published the works of many younger writers:
Robert Penn Warren, John Peale Bishop, Horace Gregory, Hildegarde Flanner, Bertram Higgins, John Wheelwright, C. A. Millspaugh, Harold L. Cook, George Dillon, Stanley J. Kunitz, Marya Zaturenska, T. C. Wilson, David De Jong, Norman Macleod, Winfield Scott, and others.

It has continued to print authoritative criticisms and reviews by R. P. Blackmur, J. G. Fletcher, R. P. Warren, Kenneth Burke, Louise Bogan, A. J. M. Smith, Robert Fitzgerald, Harold Rosenberg, D. G. Bridson, Michael Roberts, Sherry Mangan, John Wheelwright, Horace Gregory, Raymond Holden, W. C. Williams, F. R. Leavis, Joseph M. Hone, and the Editors.

Subscription: $3 a year.

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HARRIET MONROE, Editor.
MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL, Associate Editor.

(continued from page ix)

BROADUS MITCHELL is professor of political economy at Johns Hopkins University. Among his works are *The Industrial Revolution in the South* (with George S. Mitchell), and *A Preface to Economics*. He has also written for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the *Dictionary of American Biography*.

JOHN CROWE RANSOM, who has contributed to several earlier numbers of *The Southern Review*, here treats the fiction of the quarter.

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On Symbols, **G. R. Elliott**

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THE SOUTHERN REVIEW
POETRY PRIZE

The Editors announce the award of *The Southern Review* Poetry Prize of $250 to Randall Jarrell. The winning group of poems appears in the present issue. These poems were selected from among 478 unsigned manuscripts by the judges, Mark Van Doren and Allen Tate.

OF LASTING INTEREST

These articles are available in back issues:

Prodigal (an essay on Thomas Wolfe), by John Donald Wade	Vol. 1, No. 1
The Tense of Poetry, by John Crowe Ransom	Vol. 1, No. 2
Art and the Revolutionary Attitude, by Herbert Read	Vol. 1, No. 2
Political Radicalism in France, by Robert Kent Gooch	Vol. 1, No. 1
The Function of the Critical Quarterly, by Allen Tate	Vol. 1, No. 3
Education and the Social Problem, by George S. Counts	Vol. 1, No. 2
Literature and Examinations, by Aldous Huxley	Vol. 1, No. 1
Whither Europe?, by Douglas Jerrold	Vol. 1, No. 3
Hoover's Apologia, by John T. Flynn	Vol. 1, No. 4
Crisis Government: 1936 Model, by Lindsay Rogers	Vol. 1, No. 4
The Foundations of Democracy, by Frank L. Owsley	Vol. 1, No. 4
A Note on American Heroes, by Donald Davidson	Vol. 1, No. 3

THE SOUTHERN REVIEW

This number (Vol. 2, No. 2) is the sixth issue to appear of *The Southern Review*. Many items of permanent value and interest are in the first volume (a complete index will be sent on request).

For those who wish to complete their files there is still a limited supply of back numbers available.

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England Today, by Harold J. Laski
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Crisis Government in France, by Lindsay Rogers
Constitutional Change in England, by W. G. S. Adams
The Plays of Eugene O'Neill, by Bonamy Dobrée
William James, by John Dewey
Auden and the Limits of Satire, by John Crowe Ransom
The Relation of T. S. Eliot to Dante, by Mario Praz
Baudelaire and His Translators, by Malcolm Cowley
Theodore Parker, by Albert C. Dieffenbach
Pale Horse, Pale Rider, (a story) by Katherine Anne Porter
Our Friend, the Mountain, (a story) by Thomas Thompson

Other Fiction, Articles, Poetry, Reviews.

"BLIND MOUTHS"— NOTES ON THE NOMINATING CONVENTIONS

Herbert Agar

NEED THE National Conventions of our two great political parties be as deplorable as they were this year? If so, they should be abolished. If not, they should be immediately reformed. For the sake of the prestige of democracy we must have no more farces like the gatherings at Cleveland and Philadelphia.

There was no choice, in the way of badness, between the Republican and the Democratic Conventions. There was more enthusiasm at the Democratic Convention; but if possible there was also more vulgarity. The one hopeful note, both at Cleveland and at Philadelphia, was the widespread disgust among the delegates themselves at what they were engaged in doing.

The delegates were asking why the show dragged out for four or five days when everything could have been attended to in twenty-four hours. The delegates were ashamed of their own immoderate antics. They wondered whether the way to run a country is to get drunk and ride donkeys into hotel lobbies, or to scream hideously for half an hour because the chairman has just announced (what everyone has known for a month) that Senator Joe Robinson (or Senator Steiwer) is about to make a speech. The delegates knew there was something deeply wrong. They knew they ought to be doing serious work. Yet there was no serious work to do, so they took refuge in idiocy.

For this the delegates should not be blamed. The position of the average delegate at a National Convention has neither dignity nor sense. Yet

it involves subjecting himself to a kind of punishment which no man should be asked to endure. It is this combination of indignity and pain which drives the unhappy delegate to the bottle, making him behave like a professional bad-boy at a college reunion.

All the delegate has to do, for five unspeakable days, is to get himself out of bed and to the convention hall, where he sits on an uncomfortable chair until the time comes for him to make a noise. After he has made enough noise, the chairman tells him to be quiet. And when he has quieted down, reluctantly, the most cruel things are done to him.

For example, a Glee Club will begin singing, while at the other end of the hall, some quarter of a mile away, a band tries to accompany the Glee Club. The song and the accompaniment never by any chance fit together; but they fight and wrestle in the air above the dazed ears of the delegates. The next step toward breaking the delegate's moral poise is likely to be a ninety-times amplified soprano. It is hard to suggest the dreadfulness of a high female voice when amplified to the volume of a battery of field-pieces. The result merits comparison with the most oppressive punishments in hell. The minds of the delegates grow blank and rigid. Boredom ceases to be passive and becomes an acute physical pain.

Yet the pain suffered by the delegate during the entertainments is nothing to the indignity suffered by him while the serious business of the convention goes forward. For the crowning absurdity of the whole show appears when the speeches are made, when the great statesmen (whom the delegate has come all the way to Cleveland or Philadelphia to hear) finally mount the platform. For the great statesmen do not even pretend to be talking to the delegates, or to any of the people before them. Each statesman cares solely for the "unseen audience," which may consist only of his nearest and dearest but which he thinks numbers at least twenty million.

As I hope to suggest below, the triviality of our political conventions is in large part a mirror of the poverty of our political life. But in small part the evil of the conventions can be blamed upon the radio and upon modern press methods. The speaker at a convention does not look at the delegates; he looks at his manuscript, for fear he might depart too far from the written text which has been handed to all the papers twelve hours before. The speaker does not think of the delegates; he thinks of the

microphone, which will not permit him to gesticulate naturally or to show any other signs of interest in his own speech, which will not even permit him to vary too far from a dead monotonous delivery since the microphone does not take kindly to sudden changes of tone. The speaker has not written his talk with the delegates in mind. He has written it (or he has instructed his ghost to write it), not as a face-to-face speech but as a radio speech—and the two techniques are wholly different.

If the speeches are not delivered to the delegates, why are the delegates there at all? Why is the convention there at all? If the only thing wanted is a chance for a lot of politicians to make a lot of broadcasts, why doesn't everyone stay at home? A convention becomes a dishonest pretense the moment it is admitted that nobody cares in the least what the delegates think, or whether they think. There was a time when a Bryan could capture a convention, and threaten to change the direction of events, with one great speech. How can anyone capture a convention with a speech which was not written for the delegates, which is not delivered to the delegates, which is not even delivered with gestures or with a lively range of voice?

And how can anyone expect the delegates to take themselves or their politics seriously in the face of this open admission that they don't make the least difference? The delegate simply has to be on hand to make a noise—for another of the modern devices which has been introduced to the detriment of conventions is a gauge for registering noise. This is known as the "roar-machine." It stands ten-foot-high at one end of the hall. And if Mr. Hoover's ovation scores 75 on the roar-machine, Mr. Landon's has to score 85. And if the Republicans made 85 for their candidate the Democrats feel they have to make 100 for theirs. So democracy returns to the nursery, and to a system of government by screams.

But the worst thing about this insignificance of the delegates is that there is now no natural limit on speech-making. In the old days speeches had to be kept down to what the human frame could endure. But now, since speeches are made for the radio, there is no such necessity. At home, people can turn off their radios when they choose. At the convention-hall, if one set of delegates is driven mad it is easy enough to send them back and get another. The result is that speech-making at this year's conventions was not only beyond reason but beyond bearing.

After Mr. Roosevelt was nominated, for example, there were fifty-five seconding speeches. The suffering press was told in advance that each of these speeches would be short. Naturally, nobody believed that; and naturally it was not true. Everyone knows you cannot make the ordinary politician show pity once he gets on his feet. The thing to do is to keep him from getting on his feet. But when fifty-five of them are allowed to succeed one another, all on the same theme, the result is terrifying. Those fifty-five speeches dragged on through nine desperate hours, ending at a quarter to one on Saturday morning. And when, on noon of that same Saturday, I got out to the convention hall again, I found them hard at it with a depressing list of seconding speeches for the Vice-President. The meaning had long since gone out of the English language so far as the delegates or even the talkers were concerned.

During the last half of that agonizing series of speeches I walked about among the delegates. They were in a state of nervousness that was not far from frenzy. At any given moment about a third of them would be wandering aimlessly around the floor—not going anywhere, not wanting anything in particular, just dumbly seeking relief from the steady whip-like beating of the human voice. But there was no escape. The voice pursued them relentlessly.

In hell, says Milton, there are moments when

> the Thunder . . . ceases now
> To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.

But conventions are worse than hell.

II

What does it all mean? It is clear that nothing so lacking in dignity, in intelligence, and in usefulness could come from a group of people who faced politics with any high purpose. After the Philadelphia absurdities were all over, President Roosevelt made a speech at Franklin Field which dramatized the difference between statesmanship and katzenjammer. Here was true seriousness. Here was a man seized with the conviction that great and difficult tasks were to be done, with none too much time for doing them. But at the two conventions (where there was so much talk of

"crises" that the mind finally sickened at the word), the feeling was that nothing could be more important than which group of office-holders was to receive a salary, and that we had at least until doomsday to settle that fascinating point. This is no moment for democracy to show itself so trivial, to suggest so painstakingly that the insulting jibes of Mussolini may have merit.

Twenty years ago President Wilson felt sure it was America's mission to lead the world toward the liberal democracy which had inspired him and his fathers. And the world was half-persuaded that he might be right. Today that democracy is on the defensive, sneered at in much of the world, accused of having sold its ideals for a lot of windy phrases. The reasons for that abrupt decline in prestige have something to do with the reasons for such monstrosities as this year's conventions. Democracy in America has been through a bad time since the days of Woodrow Wilson's pride. It has gone through bankruptcy, and one of the great questions in world history today is whether, under new leadership, democracy can get back on its feet again.

To hear the Democrats talk at Philadelphia one would think that 1929 marked the shame of the Republican Party alone. The pity of it is that it marked the shame of both parties. The pity of it is that in 1928 the Democratic Party had accepted the whole tawdry Republican worship of prosperity, that the two candidates in that year (so far as vision was concerned, or nobility, or grasp of the old American ideal) were as like as two pebbles. In other words the democratic system itself seemed to have failed, to have been unable to produce leaders capable of pointing the road toward anything more interesting than a sty. Had Coolidge prosperity lasted for another ten years, that failure might have been decisive.

It was often said, during the 1920's, that the Democratic Party was dying. It no longer offered a real opposition to triumphant Republicanism. It no longer believed in its own ideas; it no longer had anything which even its best friends could call a soul; it merely stood for the questionable dogma that Democrats, rather than Republicans, should be in office. It seemed time for the Democratic Party to be absorbed by the Republican, making way for a genuine opposition from the extreme Left. The election of 1928, when the party of Mr. Jefferson took its candidate from the

sidewalks of a cosmopolitan city, seemed an appropriate time to admit that the end had come.

And then came 1929, and the dramatic realization that the thing which had come to an end was Republicanism, was the philosophy of prosperity which both parties had embraced but which the Republicans had long boasted was theirs alone. The thing which had gone really bankrupt was not American business, which might revive, but American politics, which had sold itself out to one of the cheapest creeds ever preached. At the behest of this creed America had abandoned all ideals save that of wealth. America, as represented by her two political parties, agreed that the primary test of a policy was whether it would produce more or less goods, not whether it would produce better or worse men.

> Slow and reluctant was the long descent,
> With many farewell pious looks behind,
> And dumb misgivings where the path might wind.

Nevertheless the descent was steady and unchecked. By 1928 both major parties were bidding against each other in their promises of how much money everyone might soon expect to have.

"The real science of political economy, which has yet to be distinguished from the bastard science, as medicine from witchcraft, and astronomy from astrology, is that which teaches nations to desire and labor for the things that lead to life; and which teaches them to scorn and destroy the things that lead to destruction." But nobody with authority, in the America of 1928, had time for "the real science of political economy." So when the crash came there was no group of important political leaders who had been criticizing Republicans on the true grounds, no group pointing out that we had been trying to build a society on wealth instead of honor, on avarice instead of justice, and that such mean attempts were bound to end in the ditch.

The people, nevertheless, vaguely felt that these things were true. They vaguely realized that the whole philosophy of Republicanism had been proved a hoax, and having no better choice they turned to the Democratic Party (so recently thought to be doomed) and gave it a mandate to revive America. Party for party, the Democrats were no better than the Republicans. But they had two great advantages: they had Mr. Franklin D.

Roosevelt, who proved able to rise to the fateful occasion that confronted him; and they had the tradition, from the earlier days of their party, of a genuine ideal, a genuine conviction that it is more important to seek a good society than to cash in quickly on every chance for new riches. It remains to be seen whether a party in the great tradition of Jefferson, capable of high politics and of redeeming democracy in a world which suspects it of being a fraud, can be built on the remains of the Democratic Party of the 'twenties. That is the task of Mr. Roosevelt and his helpers.

III

I believe that the speeches at Cleveland, and the Republican speeches since Cleveland, make it clear that the Republican Party will not prove to be the savior of democratic institutions. There has been no indication that the Republicans have learned anything important during the past six years. For example take their use of the word *conservative*. There are few more dignified or important words than this. If the Republicans, who use the word constantly, understood its true meaning they could help rebuild the moral basis of American politics. But they show no sign of understanding its meaning.

A conservative is a man who believes in the moral traditions of his race and in the institutions which have grown up as expressions or as defenses, of that moral ideal. A conservative in the Western world, for instance, will believe in the Church and the family. He will admit that the superficial forms and customs of society may have to change as the physical forms of life are changed by mechanical inventions. But he will not admit that the Church or the family can be sacrificed, or tampered with, or compromised. Whatever changes may be made in order to adapt society to a shifting environment, those changes must not threaten the Church or the family. With this allowance made, with the moral basis of society protected (along with the institutions necessary to that moral basis), the conservative can be as adaptable as anyone else. There is nothing in his creed which makes him unsympathetic to physical change, or to progress in pure or applied science, so long as such change is not made an excuse for abandoning the basic affirmations which really matter.

The conservative, it follows, will not admit that the growth of the machine, or the appearance of technological unemployment, can justify the totalitarian state. For the conservative believes that the Church is necessary to the existence of our civilization, and if the Church is to flourish it must be an autonomous Church within an autonomous state, not a Church subject to the whims of a political tyranny. Similarly, the conservative will not admit that the needs of business, or the demands of efficiency, can be an excuse for subjecting the laboring masses to a way of life which tends to destroy the family. For the family, to the conservative, is what matters; the family is necessary; "business" and "efficiency" are relatively trivial. The essence of conservatism is precisely the conviction that there are certain basic institutions which are all-important, and that the purpose of politics is to foster those institutions, to see to it that they are not sacrificed to some imaginary "economic law."

If the Republican Party, past and present, be considered in the light of true conservatism, the Party will be found to have small claim to the use of this word. From the beginning the Republicans have boasted that theirs has been the party of "prosperity," of business efficiency. They have never approved of interfering with that efficiency for the sake of such a visionary project as the Christian Church. To be sure, they speak kindly of the Church, and of the family; but it has always been their view that it is the duty of these institutions to adapt themselves as best they can to the requirements of Big Business. Any suggestion that Big Business might be called upon to modify itself in the interest of these institutions has been met with an irritated mumble about "not setting back the clock."

This, to a true conservative, is the essence of barbarism. The barbarian is without fixed values or abiding principles. If something sufficiently new and glittering comes along, his simple mind gets inflamed and he is willing to barter his most ancient treasures. The red Indian would give Manhattan Island for a string of colored beads; the Republicans would give the American dream, the whole democratic ideal, for a mess of electric ice-boxes. It should be noted, however, that there is nothing in conservatism which denies the value either of beads or of ice-boxes. But the conservative insists that first things should come first; and neither beads nor ice-boxes seem primary to a nonbarbarous mind.

So the moral bankruptcy of Republicanism can be described as follows: on the one hand, the Republicans have refused to subordinate the passing flux of economic disorder to the permanent needs of society; on the other hand, they have used all the fine phrases of conservatism every time they wanted to oppose some minor reform which might alleviate the inhumanity of Big Business. Let somebody propose a seven-hour day in an industry where the day is now eight hours, or let an attempt be made to unionize the workers in an industry which has hitherto been unorganized—at once the Republicans begin talking about preserving America. At once the Church and the family seem to become objects of their most tender care. All the best words are worn thin in an argument where they simply do not apply.

The difference between a seven-hour day and an eight-hour day has nothing to do with conservatism. Nothing is involved but a question of fact—the question of whether the seven-hour day will work, or whether it will make the business unprofitable. That is a question which wise men could discuss without dragging in fundamental principles. But the Republican Party has learned that the mention of principles is impressive in an argument. Having no true principles of its own, whenever it gets into an argument it borrows the principles of other people. And that is definitely annoying to the other people. It is annoying to a conservative to have all his important words taken in vain by people who believe in nothing more subtle than growing rich. The Republicans, by their concentration on this one aim, have jeopardized the whole basis for a sound social order; yet they call themselves conservatives because they cling to a few of their fathers' prejudices. And they have the impudence to suggest that our Christian civilization is threatened every time anybody recommends depriving them of their more flagrant rackets.

At Cleveland, and during the subsequent campaign, there has been a fine chance for the Republicans to show a change of heart, to show that they have learned during the past seven years that their thin banal materialism is not good enough, to show that they are groping toward a sincere, respect-worthy conservatism. The chance has not been taken.

This breakdown of the Republican Party cannot be explained on the theory that Republicans are bad men. The breakdown symbolizes the

failure of the modern American way of life—of monopoly capitalism, of the belief that all's right with the world so long as more goods are being produced each decade, of the outlandish belief that if a man has two cars in his garage (and can continue making his time-payments on both of them) he will be happy even though his soul rots. The Republican Party had sponsored these beliefs and had grown great on the strength of them. When the beliefs broke down, the Party found itself too weak in mind and morals to go back to the basic principles of American life and to renew itself from that tradition.

As a substitute for ideas and principles the Party has been driven, during the present campaign, to more and more frantic forms of abuse. This is not a good sign. There is a precedent in American history which shows what happens to an Opposition which loses all reason and descends to unimaginative abuse. The Federalist Party, grandfather of the Republican Party, was destroyed, and its leaders finally driven out of public life, because those leaders persisted in viewing the Jeffersonians the way many Republicans view the followers of the New Deal. America had to go ten years without an Opposition before another party could form to carry on the sensible aspects of Federalism. The following quotation, from a speech by Theodore Dwight at New Haven in 1801, is a match to many editorials in the anti-New Deal press:

> We have now reached the consummation of Democratic blessedness. We have a country governed by blockheads and knaves; the ties of marriage with all its felicities are severed and destroyed; our wives and daughters are thrown into the stews; our children are cast into the world from the breast and forgotten; filial piety is extinguished, and our surnames, the only mark of distinction among families, are abolished. Can the imagination paint anything more dreadful on this side of hell?

This is a remarkable description of Mr. Jefferson's administration. It will be noticed that Dwight, like the anti-New Dealers of today, has the faculty of picturing what he is afraid may happen as if it had already come to pass. "Our wives and daughters are thrown into the stews," says Dwight. And a few months ago the Washington *Herald* [belonging to Governor

Landon's political godfather, Mr. Hearst] announced, "Communism is not coming! It is here."

It is exactly this implacable and half-witted hatred, illustrated in the quotation from Dwight, which drove the Federalist Party into oblivion. Several of the greatest men in American history had belonged to that party, and it had an honorable record. But when Jefferson with his farmer-labor group came to power, promising to run the country in the interest of the plain man, the Federalists were so angry that they lost their heads and in the end removed themselves from public life. One of the recurring miracles of history is the way in which rich men fly into the most inexpedient rages at the suggestion that society might benefit if they were slightly less rich.

It was not only humorless to accuse Jefferson of hurling the wives and daughters of America into the stews—it was astonishingly bad politics. Yet many Republicans seem bent on repeating that mistake. History gives them two warnings. The first is that if you treat an honest man and his intended reforms the way the Federalists treated Mr. Jefferson, you destroy yourself and not your enemy. The second is that if you put yourself in the position of being patted on the back by Mr. Hearst you are probably on the way to limbo.

IV

If it were only the Republican Party at stake, many of us might view the issue with relative detachment. But it is more serious than that. The Republican Party, after all, is the party which expressed modern America. It was the majority party, and in the years before 1929 it had won the dominant group in the Democratic Party to accept all its worst dogmas. Have the American people had a change of heart, or is the present mood merely a question of, "The devil was sick, the devil a saint would be"?

The answer probably is that the American people have had a partial change of heart, and that with proper leadership they may come to a rediscovery of the national soul, to an honorable effort to build a nation embodying the moral values which American orators know so well how to name. Will the Democratic Party be able to supply such leadership?

None of my animadversions on the Republican Party are intended to suggest that the Democratic Party is necessarily superior. To judge by

this year's National Conventions, there is nothing to choose between the two parties. The tone of both conventions was set by the old-fashioned political hack—the kind of man who is responsible for the fall of democracy over half the Western world. Yet the Democratic Party has Mr. Roosevelt, and it has men like Secretary Wallace. And it has this added advantage when compared with the G.O.P.: the Republican Party from the beginning has been the party of the rich, who are notoriously hard to squeeze into heaven. The Democrats, whenever they have had any beliefs at all, have been the party of rural America, of the farmer, the small tradesman, the shopkeeper, the artisan. It has been the consensus of opinion for at least two thousand years that such men are more likely to attain a state of grace than the men who fight for great wealth or the men who inherit it. So the Democratic Party has a sound tradition to which it can return. And for the first time since the Civil War it appears to have become the majority party. Whether the excitement of that success will help it to find its soul, or merely to lose its head, is not yet certain. It takes more than a great leader and a few great lieutenants to make a political party that can change the destiny of America. But the Democratic Party at least has a good tradition to which to return. Much will depend on whether it has the steady moral energy for such a return.

It is not true, of course, that the future of democracy in America need rest with one of the two major parties. Yet events are moving so fast all over the Western world that there is little time for the slow rise of a new party of democracy. If the existing political parties continue to put on spectacles such as this year's conventions, if democracy continues to show itself to the American people in terms of cheap farce, it is quite likely that democracy, here too, will go down before the fateful advance of a new authoritarianism. It is not well when

> The hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed,
> But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw
> Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread.

If we permit such conditions, we should remember that the

> two-handed engine at the door
> Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.

Yet if we rouse ourselves and offer the American people a democracy that has nobility, that has dignity, that has the quality of grandeur that comes only to those whose ideal is more subtle than mere prosperity—if such a chance is given our people, they will embrace it.

Meanwhile, the lesson of the conventions is that the professional politician has learned nothing from the last seven years. He is content to offer the public a show that would have amused it in 1928 but which disappointed it in 1936. Ever since the War it has been true that democracy, through its lack of dignity, its lack of moral aim, has become more and more the perfect subject for a cynical musical comedy. As a result, in country after country, democracy has gone down. It will go down in America as well, if the best it can offer is the mood of the National Conventions. For those conventions bred a vicious cynicism, both in the participants and in the beholders. And the wages of cynicism is death.

NEUTRALITY

Edwin Borchard

AT A TIME when confusion marks the course of nearly all governments, it is not surprising that the subject of neutrality shares the general bewilderment and uncertainty. And yet, that uncertainty is without solid justification. It is a result of misconceptions as to how the United States got into the last war, reinforced by a propaganda which in the name of the Moral Uplift is well adapted to propel us into the next. Of the two the latter is the more dangerous, for it makes its appeal to a moral sentiment to "prevent war" and "enforce peace," while leaving out of the reckoning the political entanglements without which such policies cannot even be attempted. And far from "preventing war," their practical result could hardly fail to bring us either humiliation or war, with further ruin to international relations.

For seventeen years now, in support of the League of Nations, the most extraordinary attacks have been made upon neutrality, as a philosophy, a principle and a practice. The theory of the League, to all practical purposes based on the assumption that in 1919 the world had arrived at a political redistribution of power worthy of crystallization, was to perpetuate the *status quo* and to denounce prospective revolters, called "aggressors," as legal and moral pariahs, enlisting against them the united economic if not military "sanctions" of the allegedly "peace-loving" nations. This contrivance, embodied in Articles 10 and 16 of the League Covenant, left little if any place for neutrals, for all the "good" nations

were to be members of the *posse comitatus*. Neutrality was excoriated as illegal and immoral.

The propaganda in behalf of this system was highly financed and was intensively cultivated in England and the United States, where millions of innocent youth have been exposed to its ravages and have thereby, in the name of Peace and the Higher Morality, become highly confused and been led to make unintentional contributions to the promotion of war. The so-called Peace Movement is largely identified with this misguided ideology. Lord Robert Cecil typifies it. Having misled millions of English voters into supporting a policy of sanctions, to which the British Government unwisely succumbed, he now, still insisting on sanctions when the British Government would retreat from the fatal abyss, must submit to having his position characterized as "midsummer madness." And so it is—and was. It seems incredible that coercion and starvation exerted upon millions of people should have been deemed a peace-insuring device. But the fact that it was so considered characterizes appropriately the slogan-worshiping age in which we live.

The idea appealed to two groups—those who wished to perpetuate the adventitious provisions of the "so-called peace" treaties, to use President Roosevelt's term, and those who saw in the new device a deterrent to war. But it was shortsighted, because the determined pursuit of rigidity as a goal was bound to have the effects of sitting on a safety-valve and thus to incite and stimulate explosions. Unfortunately, it required such an exhibition as that afforded by Mussolini's adventure in Ethiopia to expose the fundamental fallacies in the whole scheme, but it is not generally appreciated that from the start it also promoted the increase in armaments, the growth of autarchy, and the consequent drying up of international trade. The threat of withholding from nations what they most need does not make for pacification but for fear, bitterness, and rage. Unless that cancer is cut from the League of Nations by a major operation, it will carry the League to an early death, the good parts with the bad, and leave its progenitors as tragic figures with as much prestige as the Crusader Godfrey of Bouillon, famed in story books for children as a noble futility. That would be a misfortune.

The series of books under review* is designed to afford a picture of the development of the struggle between belligerent and neutral interests in the various wars from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, and indicates how from these struggles there were gradually formulated rules and treaties, bipartite and multilateral, such as the Declaration of Paris, the Hague Conventions, and the Declaration of London, which enable us to speak of a "law" of maritime war. The first volume, dealing with the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, portrays practice and treaty on the law of contraband and blockade, prize court procedure, enemy property, and the rights and duties of neutrals and belligerents. It deals with a difficult subject concisely and usefully, because it relies on recorded treaties and practices for its source material. The second volume, by Professor Alison Phillips, is less legal and presents, from a somewhat British point of view, the diplomacy of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, in its political and partly in its economic aspects. It contributes less to the thread of the subject than would a study of the period by a lawyer, for while scholarly and well written, not much of its subject matter is essentially new. Mr. Reede's painstaking study of the economic effects of the wars upon neutral commerce and industry is hardly conclusive of the effect of belligerent excesses upon neutral rights, and few lessons can be drawn from the statistics. Yet it is well to have the facts, so far as they can be obtained or estimated. The third volume, by Mr. Turlington, is extremely well done in setting out the devious devices by which belligerents, particularly those in control of the sea, violated the rights of neutrals or controlled their economic life, and while warring both on enemy and neutral commerce made neutrals an instrument of belligerent policy.

We may quote from Rear Admiral Phelps, U.S.N., a summary judgment of the British war practices:

> It would now appear that the American war government's preoccupation with Germany's operations against belligerents' shipping, growing in emotional intensity, was so highly valued by Allied sea power that it was able to put out practically duplicates of its muni-

*Neutrality, its history, economics and law. Prepared under the auspices of the Columbia University Council for Research in the Social Sciences. 4 vol. 1936. $2.75 per volume.

cipal decrees that drove the Americans into the War of 1812. By abolishing non-contraband and conditional contraband; by violation of Anglo-Saxon principles of liberty, holding an accused guilty until he could prove himself innocent; by forcing neutral ships on the Atlantic trade routes to go into a belligerent harbor, go under municipal jurisdiction searching for evidence of non-compliance with its municipal decrees; by forcing neutral ships bound for neutral ports to prove that their cargoes could not eventually go to Germany—Allied sea power was permitted to destroy all the international law gains made laboriously over three centuries.

The result is that now distinction between combatants and non-combatants is destroyed, and future war operations can revert to cruelty and indiscrimination; the difference between contraband and non-contraband is wiped out and trade between peaceful neutrals may suffer attempts at disorganization at the whim and in the interests of a belligerent; blockade is no longer necessary, it can be extended by paper decree over all the high seas, rendering a neutral liable to seizure wherever he may be and whatever his destination; the doctrine of continuous voyage is distorted; the natural rights of neutrals on the high seas bound for neutral ports can be invaded with impunity unless in convoy under neutral naval protection; prize law is now so rigged that any neutral on the high seas is liable to be condemned as a prize. High seas belligerent activities have reverted to the piracy characterizing the sixteenth century. The high seas are ruled by force and not by law.

While this judgment as to the effect of British illegalities on the future law may be too pessimistic, for the rules set out with reasonable succinctness in Mr. Jessup's preface (III, x) have not been destroyed but only violated, it indicates how little justification there is for some countries to lecture others, like Italy, on the observance of law and morality. Mr. Turlington's volume covers the economic effects of the restraints exerted by belligerents on neutrals and the losses or benefits sustained by neutrals. Important as the study is for its exploration of the effects on neutrals of belligerent measures directed primarily against their enemies,

it is not perceived how the figures can have great value for the vindication and reinforcement of law in this field. In the fourth volume, Mr. Jessup himself draws together the threads of the earlier volumes and then undertakes to record his conclusions as to the present and future.

It is to be regretted that here we face an anticlimax. However highly Mr. Jessup's earnestness, industry, and imagination are to be esteemed, the conclusions would appear to have little if any relation to the former volumes from which, presumably, they were derived. Evidently believing it necessary to offer proposals for a radical change in neutrality policy, Mr. Jessup joins the procession of the recent books by Bradley, Armstrong and Dulles, and others, in search of a solution for the supposed problem of the future neutral policy of the United States. But if Mr. Jessup believed that he was affording relief from the confusion into which the subject has been drawn by well-meaning advocates of the theory of "enforcing peace," the reviewer regretfully records his belief that Mr. Jessup can hardly be deemed to have been successful in dissipating much of the fog.

In Mr. Jessup's case this is particularly unfortunate. He has shown more respect for international law and its history and purposes than many other teachers of the subject. He has not succumbed to the popular notion that neutrality is illegal or immoral. He has not offended that sense of law and history which attests the pacific functions of neutrality and its essential value in preserving the thread of civilization even when some nations go to war. But for reasons which the reviewer is unable to fathom he purports to pay tribute to the League ideology of enforcing peace under Article 16 of the Covenant. This affirmation of conflicting loyalties, which are as antithetical as belligerency and neutrality, has caused some striking inconsistencies and ambiguities in his outlook on the subject, for in professing to honor both neutrality and sanctions, he has perforce had to face two ways at the same time. Whether this be an attempt to satisfy both schools of thought, or an attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable, the result is to leave him exceptionally vulnerable. In many instances he has therefore had to become vague and noncommittal, an escape which a philosopher and guide should not resort to.

It seems strange that four centuries of history, and especially that of the last twenty years, should lead our author to the conclusion that the

way out for neutrals is to refuse to trade with belligerents, thus cutting them off from intercourse with the outside world, but to develop trade with other neutrals to make up for the loss of belligerent's trade. Out of the "milk of human kindness" (p. 198) he excepts foodstuffs. He admits (p. 212) that the "underlying theory is comparable to that back of Article 16 of the Covenant," namely, to coerce the belligerents—both or all belligerents impartially—into ceasing hostilities. In other words, the neutral is to serve as a moral mentor and chastiser of the belligerents to penalize them into peace. This idea, it must be conceded, was promulgated by Mr. Jessup in those effulgent days of long ago, in January, 1936, when it was thought that the ousting of Sir Samuel Hoare was proof of the moral regeneration of the world, that righteousness had at last triumphed over evil by the rejection of an unholy compromise with immorality, and that sanctions as an instrument of sweetness and light would bring the aggressor to heel. The fact that the unhappy business worked in reverse English, sacrificed Ethiopia and the King of Kings, exposed sanctions as a road to war, gave the League a mortal stroke, and compelled England to back down from an untenable position, had not yet been revealed. In January there was still a considerable belief in the efficacy of Article 16 as a road to peace.

But it is hard to appreciate how Mr. Jessup's proposal that trade between belligerents and neutrals should cease can do anything but make belligerents more desperate and stimulate them so to prey on neutrals that neutrals must become either their enemy or their ally. What is surprising is that an untried and unpromising, indeed romantic, scheme like this should be advanced by a professional after a critical examination of four centuries of experience of war and neutrality. It can possibly be explained by the fact that Mr. Jessup was exposed to influences which persuaded him that, like Article 16, a suggestion must be advanced which will reconcile political pressure for Uplift (sanctions) with assurance of immunity for the coercer (neutrality). But this is difficult. What evidence is there, outside the now discarded ideology of Article 16, that neutrals will ever consent to forego their legitimate trade with belligerents or that indeed except by superior force belligerents will submit to this boycott? If neighboring neutrals refuse to sell their goods, belligerents in need will

be impelled to take them. Such notions add to the fear of starvation, now strangely advanced as a weapon in the armory of peace. It is not a helpful contribution either to a limitation of armaments, to peace, or to sanity.

Nor does the exception for foodstuffs strengthen the proposal. It exposes its fallacy. It was precisely cargoes of foodstuffs which brought the greatest difficulties to neutrals in the Napoleonic Wars and in the World War. Belligerents desire to starve their enemy, by methods legal or illegal, but wish themselves to escape starvation by similar methods. Hence the diplomatic battle, which an unskillful neutral may lose and, if especially inept, may stumble into the abyss. To leave a loophole for foodstuffs, therefore, would seem to forfeit for the neutral the principal alleged advantages of nonintercourse. It would also deprive the policy of compelling peace by a deprivation of necessary supplies of its main force, for industrial belligerent nations need primarily food for their population. But apart from the impracticability of nonintercourse, what reason is there to suppose that any considerable number of neutrals or belligerents will accept the author's artificial distinction between foodstuffs and other commodities, except so far as concerns lethal weapons? The exception of foodstuffs seems to the reviewer an inferential admission of the basic invalidity of the theory.

Mr. Turlington has pointed out in the third volume of the work (page 152) that Article 16 found its source in the Allied experience in strangling Germany into submission under the "measures of blockade" and coercion exerted on neighboring neutrals. That is a sufficient indication of its peace-provoking propensities. Had Mr. Jessup waited until July, 1936, to publish his book, perhaps he would have been less convinced that coercion and starvation are useful aids in the promotion of peace or in narrowing the periphery of war. As Mr. Baruch has demonstrated in *Current History* for June, 1936, the threat of withholding essential materials from belligerents, for moral or coercive reasons, is not only a hostile act but is far more likely to project a neutral nation into the war than to keep it out.

Mr. Jessup makes a novel and original contribution by suggesting that "perhaps a union of the ideas of neutrality and of Article 16 of the Covenant may produce useful procedures for the future" (p. 179). He has evidently come to this suggestion because the so-called Argentine Anti-

War Pact of 1933 provided for a "common and solidary attitude" on the part of neutrals, in the event of a foreign war, "subject to the attitude that may be incumbent on them by virtue of other collective treaties to which such states are signatories." Inasmuch as Mr. Jessup correctly states that sanctioning states under Article 16 cannot be considered neutral, it seems hard to reconcile the solidarity of neutrals with Article 16. But Mr. Jessup, after approving, as does the reviewer, joint action and preparation for joint action among neutrals for defense of neutrality against belligerent encroachments, proceeds on a different line. His belief in the survival of neutrality, in contrast to the propagandist view that it was "a thing of the past" or should now be outlawed, arose out of the realization that even the Covenant of the League permitted of occasions for neutrality when, e. g., it was impossible to achieve agreement on who was the aggressor or when such a decision, as in the Chaco War, was delayed for months or years after the war opened. He therefore concludes that in such an event neutrality was permissible *until* the League determined who was the aggressor, after which the obligations of neutrality were to be transformed into an obligation of unneutrality under Article 16. Thus neutrality and Article 16 were to be reconciled.

With the recent demonstration that sanctions are hostile measures which can hardly obtain unanimity in enforcement and that if severe enough and if applied to a determined belligerent are almost certain to lead to war and further disorder in international relations, the whole ideal structure of Article 16 has collapsed. It will probably never again be applied, and the embarrassment of finding ways to abrogate sanctions officially has been poignant. But in any event the collapse of sanctions, far from being regrettable, removes the greatest practical opposition to genuine and honest neutrality. Having tried the "new psychology" of producing peace by hostile measures, perhaps neutrality as a philosophy and a principle may recover the prestige which a short-sighted and adolescent emotion, enamored of the New Deal of 1919, undertook to besmirch and reject as obsolete and immoral.

II

And now we must trace briefly how this deprecation and disparagement of neutrality arose. It will be recalled that the second of President

Wilson's Fourteen Points of January, 1918, provided for the "freedom of the seas," the attack upon which had ostensibly driven the United States to take up arms in 1917. But when the time came for the Armistice and the Peace, which Germany was requested to, and did, accept on the basis of the Fourteen Points, Great Britain declined to accede to the Second Point, so that in a sense it may be said that the United States lost the War before the Peace Conference opened, defeated by its own ally. This must have been a matter of chagrin for President Wilson. But when later the Covenant of the League was evolved with its provisions for the outlawing of war, he was led to rationalize the defeat by remarking that after all neutrality was "a thing of the past." This phrase has been made the keynote of the propaganda for unneutrality, embodied in Article 16 of the Covenant, and idealizing the "taking of sides" or "partiality" as the new substitute for neutrality as the way to peace.

Another device to loosen the United States from its traditional policy of neutrality is to assert, as Mr. Jessup does on several occasions (pp. 6, 11, 159, 216) that "neutrality" got us into the Wars of 1812 and 1917, hence that neutrality is a road to war. If "neutrality" is a "road to war," so is all life; nor is unneutrality, which involves enormous risks, any guaranty of peace. But the fallacy of the premise is clear. For twenty years of almost constant European war, from 1792 to 1812, the United States in spite of extraordinary provocations, remained neutral. The difficulties with France in 1798 were an episode. In the arbitrations under Article VII of the Jay Treaty of 1794, the United States obtained from Great Britain $11,650,000 (not $3,500,000, p. 149), an enormous sum in those days, for the violation of the neutral rights of American citizens. When finally the United States did decide on war against Great Britain, it was not in defense of commercial rights, but on the alleged ground of impressment of seamen on American vessels. Even that was not the real ground, for it was not mentioned in President Madison's Message of 1811, outlining the grievances against Great Britain, nor is it mentioned in the Peace Treaty of Ghent. The real motive was the desire of influential groups for expansion to Canada and Florida and the Southwest, as Turner, Adams, and Pratt have made clear. The step was precipitated by the deception practiced on the United States by Napoleon's Ministers in

falsely stating that the obnoxious Berlin and Milan decrees had been repealed, presumably leaving only the British Orders in Council in force, whereas in fact those Orders were actually withdrawn on the day the declaration of war was approved by Madison, June 18, 1812. Had the telegraph been invented, the result might have been different. Belligerency was to some extent a sheer blunder, due to French deception and lack of rapid communication. But the War was fought on American soil or in neighboring waters, and was unaffected by European issues. To say that "neutrality" drove the United States into war is misleading exaggeration. One might as well suggest that to avoid war, don't live; or inasmuch as people who walk on the street have been known to be hurt and robbed, going on the street should be avoided, for it is the cause of injury and robbery. If neutrality causes war, then every war must be a world war, for the ideology would make neutrality more costly and embarrassing than war itself. To keep out of the frying pan, jump into the fire!

When it comes to 1917, we are on more painful ground. It is a fiction to suggest that we entered the War for the preservation of neutral rights, although the superficial record might ostensibly so indicate. We got into that War primarily because the national Administration and influential groups of our people were unneutral, not neutral. Secretary Lansing wishes to go down to posterity as a statesman who wished to bring the country into war in 1915, and confesses that he was working to persuade his countrymen to adopt that course. In 1915, he professes to have discovered that the War was a war for democracy, although supported by the Czar of all the Russias and the Mikado. We had thought Ambassador Page had permitted his emotional loyalties to misconceive the interests of the United States. But never in history has an American Secretary of State undertaken to deceive his own people into the belief that he was defending their neutrality when in fact he was doing his best to undermine it. By Mr. Lansing's own admission, in his protests against British violations of neutral rights, "everything was submerged in verbosity. It was done with deliberate purpose. It insured the continuance of the controversies and left the question unsettled." The attorney of 120,000,000 trusting people wished to lose his case and plunge them into war! It thus becomes clearer why the Administration persistently refused to associate itself with other neutrals

in defense of neutral rights, why it reversed Secretary Bryan and in 1915 secretly gave its approval to the floating of loans for the Allies, why it opposed so strenuously the efforts of Congress through the Gore-McLemore Resolution to safeguard American neutrality by forbidding American citizens to take passage on belligerent vessels (now in effect incorporated in the Neutrality Resolution of August 31, 1935), why it opposed the suggested authorization to embargo arms or to exert genuine reprisals against belligerents violating neutral rights. Perhaps it also explains why Colonel House was permitted on February 22, 1916, of all days, to conclude a secret agreement with Great Britain to come to its aid if the Central Powers did not accept peace terms agreeable to the Allies. And yet Mr. Jessup and others seem to think we got into the War because we "insisted" on our neutral rights, and should now in the interests of future abstention abandon some of them. The record now makes clear that we got into the War because the Administration was *un*neutral and did *not* insist on its neutral rights. It thereby became a puppet for foreign belligerents who knew exactly what they wanted. The wonder is that such legally correct notes as those of October 21, 1915, and January 18, 1916, were actually dispatched. They are the high points of the American case for neutrality. Remarkable also is the long delay in American entrance, considering the many forces working for intervention. It attests the fundamental detachment of the bulk of the American people.

President Wilson probably did wish to remain out of the War. He merely took unfortunate positions which made intervention sooner or later quite likely. As early as February 10, 1915, when the submarine warfare was first announced as a reprisal against the Order in Council of November, 1914, purporting to close the North Sea to maritime traffic, President Wilson was permitted by his advisers to use the fatal words "strict accountability," which were later to make him their prisoner. As early as September 19, 1914, the mistaken position was taken that belligerent armed merchantmen, allegedly armed in "defense," still enjoyed the immunities of unarmed merchantmen and could not be attacked and sunk as fighting craft. Even when it became apparent that Admiralty orders required British armed merchantmen to attack submarines, the position was not changed. Only on January 18, 1916, was it perceived that the position was

paradoxical and Great Britain was informed that armed ships must lose their immunity from attack as merchant vessels. But when Great Britain frowned, the Administration ignominiously withdrew and on March 25, 1916, returned to the untenable position which inevitably led to the dilemma of retraction or war. The "Lusitania" note was framed in high moral dudgeon, although then, as in the earlier "Falaba" case, we purported to defend *belligerent* vessels from attack because they carried American citizens as passengers or crew, whereas elementary law in the case that for combat purposes passengers, crew, and even merchandise take their legal position and their risks from their location. The "Lusitania" was a vessel in the Naval Reserve, carried munitions, was in a war zone, and the passengers had been warned of its probable fate without protest from the Department of State. Deplorable though that tragedy was, the British Admiral, the Earl of Cork and Orrery, recently declared in a public lecture that he considered the sinking a legitimate act of war to which the passengers unwisely exposed themselves. In the "Sussex" case of 1916, the Administration refused to see any connection between its refusal to insist on the observance of neutral rights by the Allied Governments and its insistence on compliance by German submarines with the rules governing surface vessels. When Switzerland in 1917 requested us to observe her neutrality, the reply was that it would be observed provided Switzerland treated both sides alike. The fact is that only one American ship was sunk with loss of American lives before February 3, 1917, and that was the "Gulflight," May, 1915, on which three men perished, one, the captain, from a heart attack. Three additional American ships, "Vigilantia," "Healdton," and "Aztec," the last an armed vessel, were sunk between February 3 and April 6, 1917, with the loss of twenty-eight—not sixty-six, as one official report has it—American lives.

These losses did not cause the ultimata. They were induced by the sinking of American citizens on *belligerent,* mainly *armed* belligerent vessels, on which 177 American lives appear to have been lost. But as to these the legal case was extremely weak. Other neutral nations, such as Holland and the Scandinavian countries, suffered infinitely more, both in tonnage and lives, and yet hardly felt that war was the way out. The Wilson Administration unfortunately had miscalculated the probabilities and, like Anthony

Eden's government, had got itself out on a limb and then had to decide whether to climb back or jump off. Neither had good reason to be in the position in which it found itself. But whereas Captain Eden considered discretion the better part of valor, President Wilson permitted himself to be persuaded to plunge ahead. That was a fateful decision for the United States and for the world and the consequences can not yet be estimated. But when the decision for war was made, the moral rationalization had to be supplied, as follows:

> It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other. (Address of President Wilson to Congress, April 2, 1917.)

We have had the War; and the costs, material and moral, will plague this and future generations; but the promised results still elude us. They seem more remote than ever. Just as Great Britain was shaken from its moorings by the ill-fated Entente with France and Russia of 1904, so the United States was loosened from its moorings by the decision to participate in a European war and send troops to die in Europe. We are now a ship without a rudder, subject to the demoralizing waves of Uplift propaganda which threaten further to engulf us in the troubles of other people. We have lost that faith in law and neutrality which guided the ship of state through many a shoal. Only by a miracle have we avoided permanent association with the imperialisms of Europe; but any nation now seems

to feel free to seek to enlist us in the name of the Higher Morality in its warlike enterprises. If impressed with the beneficence of that myth called "collective security," we are likely to help enforce the policies formulated in other countries without our participation. Neutrality, no longer instinctive, must now be fought for, with the more vocal defenders of supposed morality lined up against it. We are in a perilous position, and no one can confidently say that our future is assured.

Further to befuddle the American people, the argument is advanced by certain European and American devotees of the League, that in a future European War the United States cannot remain neutral. Without knowing the identity of the combatants, or the issues of the war, we are blithely informed that we have no choice but to participate, like the proverbial Irishman ready for any and all fights. The argument is humiliating to our independence, which indeed is the object of the assault. It is assumed that because the United States entered the last war, it was inevitable that we should enter—an obvious fallacy. It is overlooked that in practically all the many European and other wars of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the United States had no difficulty in remaining neutral.

And the Briand-Kellogg Pact is used to drive the final nail into the coffin of American independence. We are informed that when any nation goes to war in violation of the Pact, our treaty rights have been violated and action must be taken. "Teeth" are demanded in order that the world may the more effectively bite and scratch its way to peace. Again much is overlooked. The Briand-Kellogg Pact is so richly endowed with exceptions and reservations, through the notes exchanged between the signatories as a condition of ratification, that it would be a curious nation that could not legitimately claim an immunity. Most notorious is the one of "self-defense," of which each nation is the exclusive and unreviewable judge. Each state "alone is competent to decide whether circumstances require recourse to war in self-defense." This is quite clear, and it takes no "legal technician" (Jessup, p. 117) to understand it. Nor does it rest on Mr. Kellogg's "assertion." It became a term of the exchange of notes circulated among all the signatories recording their understanding of the nature of the obligation they were contracting. It merely confirms the vacuousness of the Pact, even if general political conditions did not stultify it. Japan

and Italy had no trouble in invoking the nullifying exception of "self-defense." But the terms of the Pact do not fully explain it. Like the insistent demand upon us for "consultation" with certain European nations for the "preservation of peace," it was essentially a part of the relentless campaign to enlist the United States in the "enforcement" of the treaties of peace of 1919, the Pact becoming thus for us the *alter ego* of Article 16 of the Covenant. Paul-Boncour frankly admitted in 1932 that this was the object of the astute Briand; but while the Europeans are enforcing Article 16, the United States, according to the plan, would be enforcing the Briand-Kellogg Pact. Both, however, would be opposing the same "aggressor," notwithstanding the avowal of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in reporting out the Pact that its supposed injunctions were moral only and contemplated no action of any kind. Yet action was the undoubted effect of the commitment of Norman Davis in May, 1933, conditional upon some limitation of armament. It is surprising that some slight symbolic concession to the American predilection for European disarmament was not made, for the much-sought American alliance might thus have been achieved. All roads lead to this goal. Now that the more subtle devices seem to have failed, it will be interesting to observe what new directions the campaign will take. Fundamental to all the plans, however, is a disparagement of American neutrality.

III

These attacks upon neutrality as a principle and as practical policy, have weakened our morale and our self-confidence. The fact that the arguments totally lack validity and are promotive of war, not peace, has not diminished the intensity of the propaganda, which is designed to make us again a part of the European war system. But the common people cherish their right to stay out of other peoples' wars. Hence various methods have been resorted to by recent administrations in order to convince the Congress that neutrality is intended, while authority for unneutrality is requested.

After the Manchurian invasion, the Hoover Administration sought authority to discriminate against an aggressor, with or without consultation with other countries, in the matter of an arms embargo. The implications of

the proposal, which permitted an embargo against any "country or countries" the Administration selected, were not at once perceived. On reconsideration by the Senate, however, after passage of the original Resolution, an amendment was adopted at the request of Senator Johnson, designed to prevent any violation of neutrality. This amendment must have had President Roosevelt's approval, for otherwise a unanimous Foreign Relations Committee and unanimous Senate would hardly have supported it. But the good people who believe in sanctions and necessarily therefore in the taking of sides, disliked the amendment and persuaded the House to withhold its approval. Thus, the Resolution remained abortive. In the Chaco War, a neutral arms embargo was laid. In the Joint Resolution of August 31, 1935, an impartial arms embargo was again provided for, and there is some reason to believe that this was unsatisfactory to the sanctionists. A renewal of the demand for discretionary embargoes was promised. In October and November came the Ethiopian War, and the inconsistent desire for sanctions in the name of "neutrality" became apparent. American traders were asked not to trade with the belligerents in certain commodities, in order to shorten the war. In international affairs, supersensitivity to a supposed moral issue is often a dangerous guide to policy. It is frequently a mirage only. In its name the most inadvisable enterprise may be undertaken. Mr. Lawrence Dennis' article on the "Highly Moral Causes of War" in the *American Mercury* for July, 1936, should become required reading for every student of international relations. Only by good fortune did the United States escape unhappy entanglement in the Ethiopian enterprise.

The suggestion to withhold a variety of raw materials and manufactured goods from the belligerents was justified by the deprecation of "war profits," of the prolongation of the War, of the danger to American neutrality by supplying the belligerents, practically only Italy, with needed commodities. In late November, 1935, the admonition against such shipments was limited to quantities in excess of the normal peace-time supply. Presumably the League's hesitation to extend the sanctions and the abortive Hoare-Laval Agreement of December, 1935, caused a cessation of the admonitions. But in the Administration Neutrality bill of January, 1936, there was found, in addition to the impartial arms embargo and a proposed embargo on loans to belligerents, a novel provision for conferring on the Executive discretion,

after the outbreak of a foreign war, to embargo beyond normal peace-time levels any commodities needed "in the conduct of war," except foodstuffs and medical supplies. Incidentally, it was food cargoes which caused the principal controversies with the Allies in 1915 and 1916.

This presented a new development in American policy. It relied upon the prevailing prejudice against war profits, on the arguments that trade got us into the last war, that there was little difference between lethal weapons and other supplies needed in war, that the withholding of supplies would shorten a foreign war. It also satisfied the sanctionists, for with their special aptitude for picking foreign aggressors, they would be able to mobilize "the moral opinion of mankind" in the United States to urge the President to embargo the particular commodities that the aggressor might most urgently need. The more the proposal was studied, the more precarious and dangerous it appeared. Shortly before it was withdrawn, John Bassett Moore, the most experienced statesman in the field, characterized it as "a curious blend of homicidal and suicidal mania." Harsh as those words seem, and with great respect for the splendid gentlemen who backed the proposal, it must be admitted that a plan of such vast proportions, which would change fundamentally both the domestic and foreign policy of the United States, requires years of study and deliberation in the light of its infinite phases and impacts. Recently Mr. Baruch, in an illuminating article in *Current History,* has pointed out that widespread embargoes can only further demoralize the United States, foreign countries, and the cause of peace. Like the notion of abandoning neutral rights, they are far more likely to invite trouble than to allay it. The recent predilection for embargoes as a way to peace should be stemmed before it becomes a policy. It may be found in the Executive Trade Agreements, which were authorized to promote, not diminish, trade. It finds reflection in the creation and expansion of the concept of "essential war materials," an unlegal term, and the characterization of tin scrap as "munitions of war." Possibly with the demise of sanctions, we shall recover our fundamental principles and emancipate ourselves from the temptations of coercion and intervention as a way to peace.

The Nye-Clark-Maverick neutrality bill would have made mandatory an embargo beyond pre-war levels of all permitted trade with belligerents.

Such a policy also has implications which require long study, mainly in the field of administration. This school of thought is genuinely neutral, has little faith in America's capacity to reform other nations or to produce the good life by helping the righteous to trip up or suppress the unrighteous, and entertains the honest desire to have the United States attend to its own knitting and stop saving the world. It represents a revulsion against American participation in the last war on all counts. As in the case of other well-intentioned proposals, it is easier to state the end than to evolve the means. What effects such embargoes would have on American welfare, how the quotas are to be divided among suppliers, what effect they would have on our commercial treaties, what effect a similar policy by foreign countries might have on the United States, what effects the dislocations of a war cause in belligerent demands, how neutral trade would thereby be affected, how smuggling is to be controlled, whether the withholding of needed supplies would not be deemed a hostile act—these are only a few of the questions which an embargo policy raises. American experience with embargoes has been anything but happy. Whether the "cash and carry" policy can be effective is open to some question. It might take American shipping off the seas for considerable periods, and that has implications which require examination. It would seem as if the prohibition of loans to belligerents, combined with the mandatory embargo on arms, ammunition, and implements of war, might be some assurance against excessive war trade.

The bill finally adopted, February 29, 1936, did little more than add a prohibition on loans to the August, 1935, Resolution. Practically every provision in the bill could have been carried out by the Administration in 1915, had there been sincere determination to preserve American neutrality. An embargo on arms would possibly have been voted by Congress had the Administration permitted. The prohibition of loans was advocated by Secretary Bryan, and could probably have been achieved by Executive order. The warning to American citizens that they take passage on belligerent ships at their own risk is elemental law, and required no specific legislation to make it effective. The prohibition on the admission of submarines could easily have been obtained, had it been deemed a practical problem in 1915. The prohibition to supply warships at sea from American ports was achieved

by Executive order in March, 1915. The treatment of armed merchantmen as warships, subject to all the risks of such, and necessarily depriving ship, cargo, crew, and passengers of the privileges and immunities associated with an unarmed merchantman, is now established law and has been for centuries. It requires no new legislation to make it effective. Had Secretary Lansing insisted on the position taken in his note of January 18, 1916, as did the Netherlands under the leadership of that great lawyer, Struycken, we might have found it more difficult to slip into the War. But it is often well to bring into statutory form the plainest provisions of the common law, if there is doubt as to its effective administration. Hence the proposal of the Nye Report for legislation on the subject of armed merchantmen would probably be useful. Such rules are not an abandonment of neutral rights; they are a redefinition of neutral duties, requiring no apology.

The amendment of February 29, 1936, by which we promise unneutrality in the event of a war between a Latin-American and a non-American Power has no place in the neutrality bill. It goes much beyond defense of the Monroe Doctrine. Besides, our Latin-American policy seems to be entering on a new phase, shall we say of confusion? Is it proposed to transfer the European policy of sanctions to this continent? Are we to permit the Latin-American countries to take the Pan-American Union out of Washington and have an annual migratory meeting in other capitals? After promising nonintervention with reservations at Montevideo, are we going in for the "enforcement of peace" on this continent? Or shall we approve a joint defense of neutral rights? Are we to advocate widespread consultations when United States policy is in issue? Are we to hand over the initiative to other countries and make our policy subservient to theirs?

Mr. Jessup properly calls attention to the fact that the law of maritime warfare represents a compromise between the conflicting claims of belligerents and neutrals over the centuries. But that does not mean, it is believed, that the law is therefore fluid, satisfactory to neither party, open to challenge, and therefore not really law at all. Compromise is merely the method by which the result was reached, but the result is as determinate as any other rule of law. The same method resulted in the compromise between the police power and the 14th Amendment, but the lines drawn by the Supreme Court between these opposing forces is nonetheless law.

The questioning of the rules of law is another method of breaking down neutrality, and should not be espoused. Mr. Jessup himself recognizes the distinction between violating the law and challenging its existence. Dust-throwing is an old forensic device. Even if contraband has been a subject of debate and even if belligerents during any particular war seek to extend the lists, their success is largely measured by neutral acquiescence or submission and by the results of negotiation. Certain it is that foodstuffs and other commodities have a peaceful use also, and that should settle the issue. It is only when neutrals are pliant or weak that belligerents succeed in abusing the contraband lists. Salisbury's (not Palmerston's, III, viii) definition is classic and unchallengeable. The suggestion of some writers that "everything is now contraband" must be attributed to inadequate acquaintance with the history of the subject and an unfounded conviction that the violations of the last war represent the new law. Nor is everybody now a combatant. The scientific war of the future may make large numbers an unwieldy nuisance.

If war is to be controlled an entirely different road must be pursued from that taken since 1919. The very size and number of the belligerents in the recent war and the passions aroused by war propaganda prevented clarity of vision and considered judgment. But similar handicaps afflicted the Vienna Conferences of 1815; yet wise men overcame them. The one indispensable element which the peacemakers of 1919 overlooked and which those of Vienna and Ghent observed, was the necessity for reconciliation and appeasement. The Great Lakes were disarmed because pacification was the purpose of the Treaty of Ghent. Europe after 1919 was not disarmed, in spite of the promises of Article 8 of the Covenant, because the necessity for pacification was disregarded. A promise of united force to overwhelm the discontented was substituted in its stead, and the result has been a repudiation of every promise of peace, a state of hysteria, a poisoning and corrosion of social relations, and a constant and imminent threat of war. Europe is again at the mercy of an incident. Only the well-founded fear that general ruin and revolution faces any country that ventures on war serves to restrain the fatal plunge. The commitments of the Covenant are gradually weakening before the turbulent currents that are changing the balance of power and revitalizing ancient feuds.

Some of the disappointed believers in League methods are urging us to war on the dictators, and thus presumably restore peace and liberalism. But who and what produced the dictators? Nothing but the gladiators to make the world safe for democracy. Rarely has personal liberty been at lower ebb or democracy in less renown. What reason is there to suppose that a new war would end the dictatorships? Might it not rather universalize them? The League failed because too much was expected of it. Only a superstate could administer punishment to its consistent members. The League never was anything but a voluntary association of its members, who do not for a moment abandon their national interests or policies when their representatives assemble at Geneva. "Isolation," a vague word used as a term of opprobrium, has not inflated American armaments; it was intervention in the wars of foreign nations that put us on that road. Had sanctions been pursued to their natural end, war, it would hardly have helped the prestige of the League. The fundamental theory of "enforcing peace" results in the paradox of peace through war and spells its own doom. True workers for peace need not be discouraged because a fallacious system has failed. It only indicates how much more difficult the problem is than the phrase-making ideology had assumed.

Neither tragic Europe nor Asia can be saved by anything the United States can do. We can by intervention make it worse, but not better. To read into the perpetual quarrels of Europe a moral issue is to succumb to romance. Our statesmen should avoid the temptation to "sympathize" in European disputes or to espouse such war-inciting words as "aggressor," which merely excite both parties to take the sword and undermine American detachment and domestic tranquillity. Never were the injunctions of George Washington and Jefferson against foreign entanglements and alliances more appropriate and justified than now. An honest neutrality remains our only chance of dignified survival. "To do nothing to interfere with League sanctions" is simply another way of approving and supporting policies in the making of which we have had no share. It is an unsophisticated form of intervention. It is unworthy of an independent nation and almost certain to be costly in domestic divisions and disorder and in foreign resentment and disrespect. The one conclusion of Mr. Jessup that seems practical and promising is his suggestion of an association of neutrals for the defense of

neutral rights against belligerent imposition. The events and propaganda of the last twenty years have weakened faith in law, but have not destroyed the law. Well-wishers of humanity will serve their mission best by restoring public faith in the reign of law as the best defense against the corrosive ravages of force as the sole arbiter of human relations. The recent experiments with shortcuts to salvation, attended by a record of unrelieved failure and a concomitant rise in armaments, may revive faith and hope in the enduring capacity of law, intelligently administered, to sustain the thread of Western civilization.

JOHN DEWEY

Henry Bamford Parkes

JOHN DEWEY, like most modern philosophers, is primarily concerned with the incompatibility, apparent or real, between the quantitative and mechanistic world of science and the qualitative and animistic world of poetry and religion. In one of his earliest essays he declared that "we must bridge this gap of poetry from science . . . we must, in the cold, reflective way of critical system, justify and organize the truth which poetry, with its quick, naïve contacts, has already felt and reported." Forty years later, in *The Quest for Certainty,* he defined the central problem of modern philosophy as "the relation that exists between beliefs about the nature of things due to natural science to beliefs about values."

The exclusion of qualities and values from the world of science may be said to have begun when Descartes postulated a separation between matter and mind—matter being spatial, mechanistic, and mathematical, while mind was nonextended and could know matter and yet was somehow locked up inside the human brain. It followed from this doctrine that qualities and values were no part of the material world and were to be regarded as wholly mental; the mind was, however, an independent reality, and both matter and the human mind had been created by the mind of God. Later philosophers found this dualism between mind and matter, and the relationship between them, increasingly mysterious, and felt that the dualism must be surmounted by deducing one from the other. While the idealists consoled themselves by trying to deduce matter from mind, the scientists set

to work to show that the human body, including its consciousness, was wholly material, and that the notion of a creation by God was an unnecessary hypothesis. This process culminated, in the nineteenth century, with the doctrine that the real world was the world of physics—a world of forces moving and interacting in accordance with mathematical laws; the human mind, with its values and its qualitative perceptions, could be explained as due to the accidental concatenation of certain of these forces. To suppose that these forces were purposive, or that human values were more than subjective constructs, or that the aesthetic appreciation of qualities had any objective significance, was to be the victim of a prescientific animism.

The importance of this cosmology lies in its effect upon human conduct. There is an intimate relationship between our conception of the nature of the universe and our ethical judgments. As Dewey has remarked, man "acts within the world, and in order to be, he must in some measure adapt himself as one part of nature to other parts." The ethical judgments hitherto most generally accepted have been deductions from religious doctrines, and if those doctrines are abandoned, then the judgments must also be abandoned. If this fact has not yet been fully appreciated, it is because the materialists have either retained the ethics of Christianity, or, like Bertrand Russell, have struck a Promethean pose and declared that though man has created his own values, he must still cling to them in defiance of nature. Man, however, is wholly a part of nature, and either his sense of the objectivity of ethical values and his desire to submit to some cosmic purpose can be validated by a correct interpretation of nature—which is denied by mechanistic materialism—or else they are illusions to which it would be foolish to cling. A consistent materialism must result either in epicureanism or, as with Nietzsche, in an ethics of power.

Philosophers who dislike these conclusions are compelled to deny that science reveals the whole truth about nature. They must show that the world of science is mechanistic and quantitative not because the whole of nature can be apprehended in these terms but because science is precluded by its methods from discovering anything which is not mechanistic and quantitative; that there are other aspects of reality which can be apprehended by a different intellectual approach; and that even within the sphere

which science has marked out for itself there are events—biological mutations, for example—which the scientist cannot explain. The proper function of such a philosophy is not to reject the discoveries of science as illusions—a process which, as is shown by the case of Bergson, ends in irrational emotionalism—but to synthesize them into some more comprehensive *Weltanschauung.*

John Dewey has refused to envisage his task in these terms. He has instead, by an analysis of the methods of intellectual inquiry, endeavored to show that what we know is not external and objective reality but only those aspects of it which have first been modified by our own activity; from this it follows that all knowledge, scientific or otherwise, is instrumental to our practical needs and desires, and that it is to be judged by the degree to which it enables us to satisfy them. "The object of knowledge . . ." is "to gain the kind of understanding which is necessary to deal with problems as they arise." And those problems are prior to scientific investigation and determine its methods. There is therefore no conflict between science and values. The apparent conflict between them, according to Dewey, is due to the belief that science, instead of being instrumental, is a discovery of the objective reality of the universe. But "if the validity of beliefs and judgments about values is dependent upon the consequences of action undertaken in their behalf, if the assumed association of values with knowledge capable of being demonstrated apart from activity is abandoned, then the problem of the intrinsic relation of science to values is wholly artificial." This statement of Dewey's main purpose is, at least, the impression which most readers of Dewey must have acquired. One must add that Dewey has condemned other philosophers because they have been occupied with "the task of trying to show that the results of science when they are *properly* interpreted do not mean what they seem to say, or of proving, by means of an examination of the possibilities and limits of knowledge, that after all they rest upon a foundation congruous with traditional beliefs about values." Dewey himself seems, therefore, to have some other impression of what he has been trying to do. If, however, the sentence quoted does not formulate Dewey's own intentions with considerable exactness, it is difficult to assign any meaning at all to most of Dewey's philosophical writings. One can defend the theory that Dewey's epistemology is the cornerstone

of his philosophy by quoting another sentence, to the effect that "there is no way to know what are the traits of known objects . . . save by referring to . . . the processes of knowledge getting."

From Dewey's theory of knowledge it would seem to follow, firstly, that the intellectual interests of human beings are subordinate to their practical needs, and, secondly, that there is an external reality which cannot be apprehended by intellectual inquiry but which may perhaps be accessible by some other method. Dewey, however, dislikes these somewhat Bergsonian conclusions, but instead of abandoning his conception of knowledge, he tries to show that they are not implied by it. Dewey's refusal to accept the logical consequences of his own theory leads him repeatedly to make contradictory statements. It would, in fact, scarcely be unfair to say that all Dewey's epistemological arguments cancel each other out, leaving zero as the final result. His inconsistencies are, however, concealed from the unwary reader, and presumably from Dewey himself, by a philosophical vocabulary which is extraordinarily vague and imprecise, and by the frequent use of honorific words, such as "meaning" and "value" and "reality," which are intended not to convey facts but to be emotionally reassuring. By these feats of verbal legerdemain Dewey so bewilders his readers that they acquire a confused feeling that all problems have somehow been solved and that all the dilemmas of metaphysics and religion have been surmounted. It is only when one inquires what practical deductions can be made from such a philosophy that its evasions become apparent. If Dewey's epistemology is meaningless, his metaphysics consists only of a few suggestions which are not coördinated into a coherent system, and his ethic, in so far as it is defined at all, is not a deduction from Dewey's own philosophy but a survival from earlier systems of thought. Dewey's writings on current social and moral problems, though lacking in concrete proposals, impress one by their good intentions; but these intentions are a reflection of traditional beliefs which Dewey, in his philosophical capacity, has abandoned.

Dewey's epistemology originates in the Darwinian theory of evolution and in the investigations into human psychology pursued by William James. From these two authorities it would appear that the fundamental fact about human beings is that they must act in order to satisfy their

needs and that the function of the intelligence is to serve as a guide to successful action. As Dewey has rightly insisted, nobody would be interested in acquiring knowledge unless it had some practical significance. "It is strict truism that no one would care about *any* exclusively theoretical uncertainty or certainty. For by definition in being *exclusively* theoretical it is one which makes no difference anywhere." The proper function of philosophy, by which its results must be tested, is to "end in conclusions which, when they are referred back to ordinary life-experiences and their predicaments, render them more significant, more luminous to us, and make our dealings with them more fruitful."

This fact, however, does not mean that we cannot know objective reality. On the contrary, it would appear that the most useful kind of knowledge is knowledge which is objectively true; if we wish to act successfully in the world, we must first know what kind of world it is. Neither does it mean that our desires are not subjects of knowledge; we cannot successfully satisfy our desires unless we discover what those desires are, and this task is by no means easy. Human beings, moreover, cannot formulate their own desires without also formulating, or at least implying, a cosmology; the physical needs which human beings share with animals can be discovered without the aid of philosophy, but the more complex aesthetic and emotional desires which govern human conduct above the animal level are less urgent and less specific; the manner in which they are formulated varies according to the social and philosophical environment.

Dewey, however, assumes that what we know is not any objective reality unmodified by the processes of knowing it, and that our needs and desires are prior to intellectual inquiry. He seems to have adopted this notion for two reasons. In the first place, he deduces from the Darwinian theory of evolution that knowing, having originated as a guide to activity, is wholly subordinate to our practical needs. The amoeba does not formulate a cosmology; it learns, if it is lucky enough to survive so long, that its need for food can be satisfied through certain modes of activity. "Unless there is breach of historic and natural continuity," says Dewey in *Experience and Nature*, "cognitive experience must originate within that of a non-cognitive sort. And unless we start from knowing as a factor in action and undergoing, we are inevitably committed to the intru-

sion of an extra-natural, if not a supernatural, agency or principle." This argument, however, loses its force when we find Dewey explicitly asserting, on a later page of the same book, that there has been such a breach of continuity. The physical, the vital, and the mental, he says, are three different plateaus; " 'mind' is an added property assumed by a feeling creature, when it reaches that organized interaction with other living creatures which is language, communication." We are free, therefore, to believe that the capacity for objective knowledge has emerged as "an added property" during the evolutionary process; the knowing processes of civilized man cannot be explained by examining those of the amoeba, any more than we can understand the behavior of the amoeba by studying the matter from which it presumably emerged.

Dewey's second reason for denying the objectivity of scientific knowledge is a doctrine of interaction which is a relic of his early Hegelianism. Perception and knowledge, according to Dewey, are both cases of interaction between a human organism and an external object; when this interaction occurs, it causes changes both in the organism and in the object. Neither the organism nor the object, in fact, can be said to exist separately; they exist by virtue of the different relationships into which they enter. Sense data and knowledge are emergent from these combinations in the same way as water emerges from the combination of oxygen and hydrogen. What is sensed or known, according to Dewey, is not the object but the object as modified by the interaction. Similarly, the knowing of an object is not something which occurs inside the human organism; "among and within these occurrences, not outside of them nor underlying them, are those events which are denominated selves"; we must abandon the belief in "the monopolistic possession of mental phenomena by a self." This doctrine leads to some extraordinary conclusions; it causes Dewey, for example, to assert that human beings are merely "agents," and that their function in existing is to bring about the "experienced enjoyment of the fruits of a transforming activity"; sense data, apparently, are more real than the mind which apprehends them. It is, moreover, a doctrine which it is difficult to explain intelligibly. The distinction between subject and object disappears; knowing is something which is not performed by the brain of the subject but which is a blend of subject and object, the subject knowing and the

object known becoming identical. By this theory error and illusion are hard to account for. We are forced to assume that what we consider to be "errors" are just as "true" as what we consider to be "truths," and that the difference between them is that "truths" are more useful for practical activity. We must then define what we mean by usefulness—a task which demands a formulated system of ethical values and which Dewey refuses to undertake. Dewey confines his theory of knowledge to applied science, but there seems to be no reason why it cannot consistently be extended to the sphere of metaphysics and why we cannot ascribe utility, and therefore truth, to the belief in God, with William James, or to the belief in the supremacy of the national state, with Mussolini.

Moreover, Dewey does not adhere to this theory consistently. When he comes to expound it in detail, he abandons the notion that knowing is an interaction of subject and object, and assumes instead that the object is changed by the process of knowing it and that what we know are these changes; instead of asserting that the knowing is the interaction, he now says that the interaction is what is known. "The *consequences* of directed operations form the objects that have the property of being *known,*" he tells us. "We know what we intentionally construct." "Knowing is a participant in what is finally known"; and "if we see that knowing is not the act of an outside spectator but of a participator inside the natural and social scene, then the true object of knowledge resides in the consequences of directed action." "There will be as many kinds of known objects as there are kinds of effectively conducted operations of inquiry which result in the consequences intended." From this doctrine Dewey deduces that "the business of thought is not to conform to or reproduce the characters already possessed by objects but to judge them as potentialities of what they become through an indicated operation." We must therefore reject the belief that "knowledge is a disclosure of reality," that "knowledge is possession of the inner nature of things."

Dewey endeavors to prove this conception by applying it to a particular kind of knowing—that of science—and then extends it to all kinds of knowing. When we endeavor to discover the nature of an object by scientific inquiry, we experiment with it and make changes in it. Similarly, when we wish to know whether a theory is true, we test it by practical

operations, and we may agree that any theory which cannot be so tested is probably meaningless. In all such cases, however, our purpose is to discover objective truth. The scientist makes experiments which will show the object in a new light and in new relationships, in order that he may discover more about it. Science, moreover, has progressed chiefly through increasing objectivity, through the increasing elimination of subjective interference with the objects which it studies. Most important scientific developments—such, for example, as the Copernican theory and the theory of relativity—are illustrations of this elimination of the subjective. Dewey, however, insists that experimental science is a proof of his theory of knowledge; he argues that the motive of the scientist in making experimental changes is not to discover truth but to make his object more practically useful, and that what the scientist knows is not the object but the changes which he makes in it. All science, according to Dewey, is applied science; the experimental methods by which the chemist discovers the properties of iron are no different from the practical operations by which the mechanic moulds the iron into reaping machines. Experiment alters "a physically antecedent situation in those details and respects which called for thought in order to do away with some evil." "Ideas are statements not of what is or has been but of acts to be performed." This identification of the knowledge which a scientist acquires about the properties of objects with the learning of those physical habits which guide the activity of a mechanic scarcely deserves refutation. We may, however, call attention to the manner in which Dewey applies it to the study of astronomy. The astronomer at least, one would have thought, does not make changes in the objects which he studies, neither is his purpose "to do away with some evil." According to Dewey, however, the fact that the astronomer studies the stars from different angles and at different times proves that what the astronomer is really studying is not the stars as they are in themselves but the changes which are made in the stars by his own movements.

The trump card with which Dewey endeavors to prove his theory of knowledge is the principle of indeterminacy in modern physics. Physicists have found it impossible to determine both the velocity and the location of an electron at any given moment because the flash of light, necessary to observe the electron, itself causes the electron to change its

location. According to Dewey this is an example of how knowing changes the object known. There are several replies which can be made to this assertion. In the first place the physicist who involuntarily changes the location of the electron is not engaged in "doing away with some evil"; he is merely trying to ascertain a fact. In the second place, what changes the location of the electron is not the knowing of it by the mind of the physicist but the flash of light; this is a case of interaction not between subject and object but between two objects. And in the third place, the principle of indeterminacy is not an example of the normal methods of physics; it is an example of how, under certain unusual conditions, those methods are unable to arrive at a desired result. If physics had always operated under similar handicaps, its inability to discover the location of electrons would not have caused such excitement, nor would philosophers have seized upon it with such undisguised and premature glee.

Dewey's theory of knowledge cannot, therefore, be applied to the processes of scientific inquiry; still less is it true of other forms of knowing —of the knowing of historical events, for example, or of the methods by which we ascertain that a certain combination of sense data indicates a table or a chair. According to Dewey, however, *all* knowing is a knowing of changes made in the object of knowledge; knowing always involves action. We do not know merely with the brain but also with the whole body and with external instruments. "Hands and feet, apparatus and appliances of all kinds are as much a part of it [of knowing] as changes in the brain." "The reorganization . . . effected by thinking is a physical one. Thinking ends in experiment and experiment is an *actual* alteration of a physically antecedent situation." Thus when we deduce that certain sense data indicate a chair, we may think that throughout the process the chair remains a chair. According to Dewey it does not; the chair as finally known is not the same as the chair before we knew it; the change is not merely inside our brain, it is in our interaction with the chair and therefore—in some very mysterious fashion—it is in the chair as well as in us. For, says Dewey, "how can we segregate, *antecedently* to experimental inquiry, the 'physical chair' from the chair which is now the object to be known?" To do so would be to commit "the fallacy of confusing an existence anteceding knowing with the object which terminates and fulfils it." By the same logic

it follows that when we are doubtful, the doubt is not really in us but in the object; for "if doubt and indeterminateness were wholly within the mind —whatever that may signify—purely mental processes ought to get rid of them."

Dewey defends this conception by asserting that the acquisition of knowledge is a change which occurs in nature. Most people would say that the particular kind of change which is called knowing is one which occurs inside the human brain. Dewey, however, forms the conclusion that if knowing is a change, then it must, by virtue of his doctrine of interaction, cause physical changes outside the brain. "If knowing be a change in a reality," he says, "then the more knowing reveals this change, the more transparent, the more adequate it is." The protasis in this sentence refers to the fact that knowing involves changes in the human brain, while in the apodosis these same changes are projected into the object known. Similarly, on another occasion, he asserts that "if it be admitted that knowing is something which occurs in nature"—a statement which will be readily agreed to —"then it follows as a truism that knowing is an existential overt act" and therefore that it makes changes in its object. It is characteristic of Dewey to leap over the most impassable *non-sequitur's* by talking about truisms. This notion, according to Dewey, has the additional advantage that it gets rid of the mind-body problem; if thinking is a physical activity, then there is no longer any mind to be accounted for. "Knowing is one mode of doing," and "the metaphysical puzzles regarding parallelism, interaction, automatism, the relation of consciousness to body, evaporate." If Dewey's epistemology is accurate then such puzzles do evaporate. But unfortunately it remains true that thinking consists of processes inside the brain and not of movements of our hands and feet, and that the brain possesses certain faculties—that of recalling the past in mental images, for example—which are difficult to account for in purely physical terms. Dewey has not caused this problem to "evaporate"; he has merely refrained from embarrassing himself by raising it.

As was stated earlier, Dewey's epistemology would seem to imply, firstly, that the purpose of all knowledge is to promote successful activity, and secondly, that what we know is not objective reality. If it does not

have these implications, then it is self-contradictory and meaningless. Dewey, however, refuses to accept them.

Knowledge, according to the aphorism which Dewey quotes with approval from Bacon, is power. The purpose of knowledge, according to Dewey's epistemology, is to enable man to control nature in order to satisfy his needs. A world of men wholly devoted to the acquisition of power, whether over nature or, presumably, over each other, is, however, a somewhat unattractive prospect, and Dewey has sufficient moral sensitivity to be repelled by it. The result is that having based his theory of knowledge on the assumption that it is an instrument for the acquisition of power, he refuses to accept this conclusion and agrees that the purpose of knowledge is, after all, knowledge. "Action, when directed by knowledge," he says, "is method and means, not an end." We must pass "from a perceptible experience which is blind, obscure, fragmentary, meager in meaning, to objects of sense which are also objects which satisfy, reward and feed intelligence." The significance of science "clearly resides in the fact that it marks an added depth, range and fullness of meaning conferred upon objects of ordinary experience," and "those who participate in these consequences have a knowledge of the things of ordinary perception, use and enjoyment as genuine and fuller and deeper than that of the scientist in his laboratory." If, therefore, scientific inquiry is instrumental, knowledge and not power is what it is instrumental to. Dewey has built up his denial of the objectivity of scientific knowledge round the doctrine that it is instrumental to activity; he now abandons this doctrine. One set of statements cancels the other set, and we are left with the old-fashioned view that the aim of science is truth, sought not only for practical utility but also for its own sake. Similarly, Dewey's instrumental theory of knowledge implies that what we know is not objective reality; scientific laws are to be judged not as true but as useful. To adopt this interpretation, according to Dewey, is to deprive the materialistic cosmology created by science of its depressive force. Once again, however, this conception, if followed to its logical conclusion, has implications which Dewey dislikes, and in his anxiety to avoid them he abandons his whole theory. In the first place, if we assert that intellectual inquiry does not discover objective reality, then we imply that there may be some other mental faculty which does

discover it, and this leads us directly to a Bergsonian irrationalism. And in the second place, what led Dewey to his theory of knowledge was the assumption of the objective truth of a certain scientific hypothesis—the hypothesis of evolution. But if scientific hypotheses are not true but merely instrumental to human needs, then there is no reason for supposing that the hypothesis of evolution is objectively true and that it can explain the functioning of the human mind which formulated that hypothesis. By arguing in a circle Dewey has cut the ground from under his own feet. His solution to this dilemma is to alter the meaning of the word "reality." Having shown that the products of intellectual investigation are not real in the usual sense of the word, he now asserts that they are real, that objects which have been changed by experimental inquiry are precisely what is meant by reality. Objects which are not known—"brute existences" which have not been subject to the processes of knowledge-getting—exist; the universe, apart from human knowledge, exists; but in some mysterious fashion they are not real. Or if they are real, then, says Dewey, introducing a queer ethical criterion of truth which might be used to justify any kind of comforting illusion, they are not "good reality." It is therefore quite wrong, according to Dewey, to deduce from the doctrine of interaction that "it is impossible to know reality." "Phenomenalism, which holds that impressions and ideas come between the knower and things to be known," is not, as one might suppose, implied by the instrumentalist theory of knowledge; it is, as a matter of fact, contradicted by it. "Products of intentional operations are objectively real and are valid if they meet the conditions involved in the intent for the sake of which they are constructed." Scientific laws are "conceptual"; they are "thought, not observed"; nevertheless, they are not merely mental; they take account of reality, even though they do not conform to it. "Knowledge," in fact, "*is* reality making a particular and specified sort of change in itself."

So the results of scientific inquiry are, after all, real. What then is the status of qualitative appreciation—which is not included in the scope of scientific inquiry but which Dewey was anxious to justify? Dewey answers this question by once again juggling with the word "reality." There are kinds of "reality" which are to be apprehended not by the intelligence but by the emotions. It is fallacious to suppose that "knowledge

has a monopolistic claim to access to reality." Objects of knowledge are not more real than "experiences of objects had by the way of affection and practical action," nor is it legitimate to condemn the products of such experiences as "subjective and phenomenal." We must "acknowledge that all modes of experiencing are ways in which some genuine traits of nature come to manifest realization." "The isolation of traits characteristic of objects known, and then defined as the sole ultimate realities, accounts for the denial to nature of the characters which make things lovable and contemptible, beautiful and ugly, adorable and awful." "Empirically, things are poignant, tragic, beautiful, humorous, settled, disturbed, comfortable, annoying, barren, harsh, consoling, splendid, fearful; are such immediately and in their own right and behalf." "These traits stand in themselves on precisely the same level as colors, sounds, qualities of contact, taste, and smell."

To ascribe this catalogue of adjectives to "things" is, however, in the first place, intellectually indefensible, since it is obvious that many of the adjectives apply not to the things in themselves but to the manner in which we experience them, and that which is comfortable or consoling to one individual may be annoying or harsh to somebody else. And in the second place, it is no answer to the question at issue; what human beings want, rightly or wrongly, is some intellectual justification for the idea that beauty is an objective reality, purposefully created by the processes of natural development and not merely constructed by the human mind when it apprehends certain objects, and this desire cannot be satisfied by a blunt assertion that "things" *are* beautiful, particularly when the quality of beauty is combined with such obviously subjective qualities as "comforting" and "annoying." What Dewey means by the statement that knowledge has no "monopolistic claim to access to reality" is, moreover, very mysterious. If he had stated that science, with its mathematical and mechanistic modes of inquiry, cannot reveal the whole of reality, he would have made an assertion with some meaning; and he might then have gone on to synthesize the discoveries of science with those other aspects of reality which can be apprehended only by a different intellectual discipline. But to limit the scope of knowledge and then to make statements about what is outside its scope is to talk in contradictions. The assertion that something is beautiful is an assertion

that its beauty is an object of knowledge. It is totally impossible to make any statement whatsoever about objects which cannot be known. To say that there is a reality to which knowledge has no "claim to access," and then to make certain propositions about that reality, is an absurdity. Either "things" are beautiful—an intellectual proposition which implies a whole metaphysic—or else, as scientific materialism asserts, the beauty is inside the human brain and can be defined in terms of physiological processes.

Dewey's epistemology is therefore self-contradictory and offers no solution to the problems with which Dewey is occupied. Its inadequacy can be further illustrated by examining its ethical and philosophical implications.

If Dewey's epistemology is true, then any kind of metaphysics is impossible. If all that we can know of the world is the changes which we ourselves make in it, then we cannot know what kind of a world it is; we can merely learn modes of activity which are conducive to the satisfaction of our physical needs and of the desires which we may find within ourselves. Our inability to discover the real nature of the world cannot be surmounted by altering the meaning of the word "reality" and applying it to those modes of activity which give us satisfaction. Under such circumstances it would appear that the only forms of knowledge which are possible are the specific sciences—such as chemistry or economics—which minister directly to our practical needs. Philosophizing becomes a very futile procedure—to be written down as mere wish-fulfillment. Our proper task, as Dewey has repeatedly stated, is to stop trying to demonstrate that the world is of such and such a character and to learn instead to control natural forces for our own benefit. Dewey insists that philosophy may contribute to this task, but throughout his writings he offers no indication of how the philosopher can do so; all the traditional problems of metaphysics have been dismissed as meaningless. One is therefore impelled to wonder why Dewey himself ever became a philosopher or why, having once formulated such an attitude, he did not promptly abandon philosophy and apply himself to one of the specific sciences. If Dewey's doctrines were to be universally accepted, then Dewey himself would presumably be the last philosopher in history—the man who had finally demonstrated that philo-

sophical knowledge is impossible and the attempt to discover any a waste of effort.

Nevertheless metaphysical assertions persistently creep into Dewey's writings, though, characteristically, Dewey admits them somewhat furtively, with a sense of embarrassment which prevents him from drawing out their full implications. The chief reason for their presence is that without metaphysical support Dewey will be compelled to adopt an ethics which he dislikes.

To assert that all knowledge is instrumental to human needs is to imply that those needs are fundamental postulates. Man must satisfy his "quest for certainty" by adapting nature to his own needs; to attempt to change his own needs in order to bring himself into harmony with nature would be a mere evasion and in any case, since we cannot know what nature is apart from the changes which we make in it, impossible. This conception makes nonsense of any ethical doctrine which involves self-sacrifice; man can no longer regard himself as part of some larger whole, in whose interests he must occasionally surrender his own personal inclinations. This applies not merely to supernatural religion—to the belief that man exists to glorify God and to do His will—but also to self-sacrifice in the cause of mankind or of a nation or a class, since all such doctrines are based on metaphysical assumptions about the relationship of man to his environment. Dewey himself may insist that he is thinking in terms of society and not of the individual, and that the individual should occasionally sacrifice himself for the good of his neighbors, but no such doctrine can be justified in terms of Dewey's epistemology; and when Dewey applies it to ethical problems, what he arrives at is a kind of egocentric epicureanism. The task of moral theory, he tells us, is not to discover what good is or to exhort men to seek goods of a particular kind; philosophy has "no private access to good." It accepts as goods what are found to be such in experience, and by "discovery of the conditions and consequences of their appearance," shows how they can be achieved more frequently and with greater stability. If this statement meant merely that there are no moral formulae which are universally applicable, and that the good must be discovered by a process of trial and error, it might be accepted; but Dewey's insistence that goods are already known, coupled with his epistemology, leads to a far more

doubtful conclusion. The subject matter of ethics, for Dewey, is not "good" in the singular—meaning, a certain mode of self-development, the achievement of a certain type of character—but concrete "goods," which refer chiefly to the pleasures of the mind and the senses. Sense data, caused by the interaction of a mind and an object, are, for Dewey, more real than the mind by itself, if such a thing exists; and men, as Dewey has told us, are not ends but "agents"; ends are to be "found in the experienced enjoyment of the fruits of a transforming activity." Those interactions which cause pleasure are therefore the true ends of all human conduct, and it is to them that all intellectual inquiry is instrumental.

That Dewey has ever carefully considered the implications of this attitude seems improbable. It is quite contrary to the kind of moral practice in which Dewey really believes and which he advocates when he is expressing his own conviction and not trying to formulate a philosophy. Dewey the man, as distinct from Dewey the philosopher, believes in the value of struggle and self-sacrifice. Dewey the man is a product of the democratic and pioneer America of Jefferson and Lincoln, and everything in his writings which is exhilarating and healthy and honestly felt and expressed springs from this tradition. He believes in the revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity; he believes in a society in which all men alike will be free to develop themselves and to enjoy intellectual endeavor and aesthetic delight; and he praises the effort to create such a society. When he gives free rein to these convictions he speaks with a vigor which is absent from his philosophical discussions and, instinctively, he falls back upon metaphysical supports. He realizes that to believe in ideals is to believe also that those ideals are validated by the universe in which we live. "We and our endeavors," he tells us, "are significant not only for themselves but in the whole." "It implies a unity with the universe which is to be preserved. The belief and the effort of thought and struggle which it inspires are also the doing of the universe, and they in some way, however slight, carry the universe forward." "Nature, including humanity, with all its defects and imperfections, may evoke heartfelt piety, as the source of ideals, of possibilities, of aspirations in their behalf, and as the eventual abode of all attained goods and excellences." This mystic sense of a unity between man and nature, which gives meaning to man's aspirations and

value to his existence, is the essential Dewey. In what is perhaps the most eloquent of his essays he has sketched the kind of universe which, in his opinion, will "sustain and support our democratic hopes and aspirations"—a universe in which the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity are not merely human creations but a part of its very structure, in which "there is real uncertainty and contingency," in which "every existence deserving the name of existence has something unique and irreplaceable about it," and in which "what is specific and unique can be exhibited and become forceful or actual only in relationship with other like beings."

But if Dewey really believes in a universe which is a "whole" and in which man and his endeavors are "significant"—in which, in fact, as he tells us, the appearance of man gives "ulterior processes a purposive meaning" and man's intelligence is "nature realizing its own potentialities in behalf of a fuller and richer issue of events"—he is unable to reconcile this belief with his epistemological speculations, and in consequence has failed to draw out its implications and to formulate it in rational terms. Any such statement about the nature of the universe and of man's place in it is incompatible with an instrumentalist theory of knowledge. It implies a coherent and rationalized metaphysics—a metaphysics which regards the universe as a process toward higher forms of existence and which finds the meaning of human life in the struggle to carry the process forward—such a metaphysics, for example, as that of dialectical materialism, or, more adequately perhaps, that of a Christianity which had abandoned the otherworldly and supernatural accretions which it acquired during the Dark Ages. And because Dewey has failed to make his beliefs sufficiently coherent and explicit, the practical deductions which he makes from them are similarly indefinite. Having no rationalized metaphysics, he has no concrete scheme of values which he can apply to the actual exigencies of life. All of Dewey's writings on political and social questions are admirable in their intentions; but they are almost confined to generalities. The only practical suggestion which he has ever advocated explicitly and enthusiastically is, of all things, the Kellogg Pact to outlaw war—a suggestion which could be supported without heart-searchings because nobody opposed it and which, for that very reason, was futile. On all questions which involve conflict between opposing groups, and consequently a choice, and con-

sequently a definite belief that one mode of behavior is better than some other mode, Dewey is unable to commit himself. Instead of making choices, he confines himself to the pious aspiration that in the future we shall have a science of human nature comparable to the physical sciences—a development which will apparently preclude us from the necessity of holding beliefs and making decisions (though if all science is now instrumental to needs, it is difficult to see how the procedure can some day be reversed and our ideas about needs become dependent upon science). A similar illustration of how the lack of metaphysical doctrine weakens practice is afforded by Dewey's disciple, Professor Sydney Hook. Mr. Hook, dressing up Deweyism in Marxist clothes, declares that Marxist doctrine is instrumental to the needs of the proletariat. Why, however, anybody not a member of the proletariat should adopt Marxism, or what reason there is for supposing that the viewpoint of the proletariat is either truer or more generally useful than that of some other class, are questions which by this epistemology cannot be answered. Faith in the revolutionary transformation of society, like any other kind of faith, can be justified only in terms of a cosmology.

Dewey has always liked to regard himself as an American philosopher —as a thinker engaged in formulating a system of ideas which will be in harmony with American democratic ideals. This description is true in a profounder sense than Dewey himself has ever realized. Dewey is American not merely because he believes in democracy but also because he illustrates, more clearly than any other American thinker, the reason why the aspirations of Jefferson and Lincoln have not yet reached fruition. Dewey's long polemic against European metaphysics is justifiable in so far as it is an attack on that divorce of theory from practice which leads to political and social conservatism; but in denouncing a theory separated from practice he has failed to realize that any practice implies a theory, and that the alternative to a metaphysics of conservatism is a metaphysics of radicalism—a metaphysics which will support man's aspiration towards a freer and fuller life. His belief in the unique value of every individual is justifiable as a protest against the hierarchies of feudalism and Catholicism, but in asserting the right of the individual to free self-expression, he has forgotten that democracy does not mean the abolition of standards of

behavior but their universal acceptance. In emphasizing the criterion of utility he has persistently failed to answer the question "useful for what?"; and however much Dewey himself may protest that "instruments imply, I should suppose, . . . values for which tools and agencies are to be used," his refusal to explain clearly what he means by values tends, in practice, to encourage a crude materialism and has led even Dewey himself to praise "the newer morale of industry and commerce," "the ethics of industry and of reciprocal contractual service." Deweyism illustrates, as the history of America so clearly illustrates, that the elevation of mankind, no less than the attempt to impede its elevation, requires positive standards of human behavior and that standards involve metaphysical beliefs about the nature of the universe.

SOUTHERN EMPLOYERS AND LABOR REFORM

Virginius Dabney

THE SITUATION which exists currently in the South—with respect to the establishment of civilized labor standards, collective bargaining, and the development of an appreciable social awareness—is not particularly heartening, although there are a few signs and portents which lead one to indulge the hope that better things may be in the offing. Reform in this sphere has been a gradual process in all countries; hence, the slowness with which results are being obtained in the Southern states is not necessarily ground for serious discouragement.

I had occasion last winter to observe at close range the *modus operandi* of the Virginia Manufacturers' Association, an organization which shares with similar bodies in other states the chief responsibility for the backwardness of Dixie in the field of industrial relationships. The Virginia Legislature was considering a program calling for social security and improved labor laws. Important items were participation in the Federal system of unemployment insurance and old-age pensions, passage of an eight-hour bill for women in industry, a minimum wage bill for women and minors, liberalization of the workmen's compensation law, and passage of a law requiring fire-escapes on all factories two stories high.

Every single one of these bills failed of passage, and by far the major share of the responsibility lies at the door of the Virginia Manufacturers' Association. The members of this group of industrialists are no more callous than their *confrères* in other sections of the South. Not a few of

them, indeed, are kindly and well-disposed men in their private capacities whom I am glad to count as my friends. But organized for the defense of what they consider their prerogative to preserve the *status quo* in Virginia industry, they are the very quintessence of Bourbonism and reaction.

They fought participation in the Federal unemployment insurance program with every weapon at their command, and succeeded in their objective, over the apposition of Governor Peery. The consequence is that some $9,000,000 probably will be paid out by them to the Federal Government in the next two years, not a cent of which will return to Virginia. They claim that the Federal Social Security Act is unconstitutional and that they can avoid making any payments until the Supreme Court passes on the question. Both claims are of dubious validity, but even if they were not, the violent opposition of the Virginia industrialists to jobless insurance reflects little credit on their intelligence or their liberalism.

This same group of manufacturers defeated the eight-hour bill for women, although it passed the House by fifty-eight to thirty and contained numerous exemptions for industries operating under special circumstances. Unable to advance any effective arguments against this thoroughly reasonable and humane legislation, which was to have replaced a law covering women in industry passed in 1890, the association's spokesmen could only repeat the monotonous chorus, "Don't shackle us!" The industrialists admitted that in the vast majority of instances they are operating eight hours or less at the present time. Opposition to the bill was led in the Legislature by a member who is a manufacturer, and whose attitude was succinctly expressed in his statement that he could not see "why so many women worry about the hours of labor of other women who have jobs." This gentleman led the fight on unemployment insurance, saying that advocates of such insurance reminded him of those "old maids and old bachelors" who try to tell married people "how to raise a family." Another prominent legislator strongly opposed the eight-hour bill for women on the ground that it would "destroy Virginia business because industries in North Carolina work women ten and twelve hours." This is partially incorrect, since the maximum day for women in North Carolina industry is eleven hours, but the argument was effective, nevertheless.

The minimum wage bill was not even introduced, the opposition was so strong. There was a proposal that the maximum payment of workmen's compensation insurance be raised from fourteen dollars a week, the lowest in the entire South (Arkansas and Mississippi have no workmen's compensation law), to sixteen, but the manufacturers set up their accustomed plea that any such increase would be disastrous to them. Just why Virginia manufacturers can afford a maximum of only fourteen dollars, whereas those of Florida can afford eighteen and those of South Carolina twenty-five, has never been satisfactorily explained. True, some believe Virginia's administration of the law to be the most efficient and intelligent in the South, and the state has a higher minimum than a good many others, but does that justify a fourteen-dollar maximum? At the recent session, the Virginia Manufacturers' Association also defeated proposals for liberalizing the workmen's compensation law in three other respects. None of the four proposals even got out of committee.

The fact that the Virginia Legislature failed to give the Federal Government any coöperation in the field of social security should not, as a matter of fact, be considered particularly surprising, for the South as a whole has been slower to grasp the necessity for this type of law than any other section, and is showing less inclination to join with the Federal authorities in making their program effective. Similarly, it is not astonishing that the women's eight-hour law was defeated, for no other Southern State has such a law. Miss Lucy R. Mason, who led the fight for the bill with great energy and ability, hoped that if a bill of this kind could be passed in Virginia, other legislatures below the Potomac would follow suit. But the unbending conservatism of the region came into play, and although the House passed the measure by a substantial majority, it was killed in a Senate committee.

The attitude displayed by the Virginia Manufacturers' Association toward this and similar legislation is no new thing. It is the usual attitude of Southern industrialists, who frequently take their cue from the Southern States Industrial Council, formed in the early days of the Roosevelt Administration by Mr. John E. Edgerton, who operates a woolen mill at Lebanon, Tennessee. Manifestoes from this organization dilate at great length upon the importance of protecting "free and independent labor of the South"

from "the domination of a minority organization"—evidently the American Federation of Labor—and from the wiles of "outside agitators."

It specifically affirms "the right of any group to organize in lawful ways for lawful purposes to be lawfully pursued," but neglects to explain why so many Southern industrialists fire any workingman who lawfully joins a union and lawfully persuades others to do so. Mr. Edgerton, who probably is thoroughly convinced that the A. F. of L. is one of the most pernicious agencies in this country, is famous for the paternalistic arrangements in his Tennessee mill, where the work day always begins with a patriotic song, a prayer, and Bible reading. These religious exercises have brought about a situation, he says, where "the employees go to their work with love and goodwill in their hearts and a song upon their lips."

Prayer, in so far as I am advised, is not on the agenda of the Friedman-Harry Marks Clothing Company in Richmond, but in other respects its management seems completely in sympathy with the doctrines of Mr. Edgerton and his Southern States Industrial Council. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union sought during most of 1935 to unionize this garment factory. As in the case of the Tubize Chatillon rayon plant at Hopewell, Virginia, the previous year, employees were discharged for union activity, and when the National Labor Relations Board ordered their reinstatement, the management refused to comply. It contended that the Wagner-Connery Act is unconstitutional, and also that the board is without jurisdiction. At the same time, it announced that the case would be carried to the United States Supreme Court, if necessary. Despairing of getting a decision before hundreds of employees had been discharged, and fearing the Wagner-Connery Act might ultimately be declared in contravention of the organic law, the Amalgamated found it necessary to abandon its effort in January of this year. Violence was lacking, but otherwise the attitude of the company was in the tradition of Marion and Gastonia and Harlan. Another Southern employer had smashed an effort at unionization, and thereby had kept wages down.

A fundamental issue raised by such an episode as this is whether the apparent collapse of Federal efforts to enforce collective bargaining in the South will not lead to a great influx of industries paying low wages and operating under sweatshop standards. The difficulties in the way of

enforcing Section 7 (a) and the Wagner-Connery Act have been considerably greater in the South than anywhere else, doubtless because of Dixie's well-entrenched anti-union tradition. The consequences are now expected to be serious both for the North and the South. If there is an exodus of industries from the North, it will mean thousands upon thousands more unemployed in that section, while the arrival of such industries in the South, with its great surplus of unskilled workers, will probably debase the already low wage scale, augment the large body of exploited labor, and contribute to the economic maladjustment of the region.

It is a curious fact that manufacturers in this and other countries have usually seemed to be incapable of grasping the desirability of making important voluntary concessions to their employees. There have been, and there are, exceptions, of course. For example, after decades of the harshest kind of criticism from humanitarians and the press, the American textile operators sought voluntarily in 1930 and 1931 to limit hours of work for all employees and to abolish night work for women and minors. Not more than eighty-five per cent of the industry could be induced to sign the agreement, but the effort was commendable, nevertheless.

It cannot be denied, however, that the attitude of manufacturers is customarily the same the world over. Witness the career of the great British reformer, Lord Shaftesbury. He began his assault on Britain's industrial fraternity in 1833, and continued unremittingly for half a century, until he had brought about a revolution in the industrial life of his country. It seems unbelievable that the manufacturers of any supposedly civilized land could have worked children five years of age from 5 A.M. to 8 P.M., or somewhat older children from 3 A.M. to 9 P.M. It seems incredible that these children could have been beaten with straps by brutal overseers when they failed to work at top speed, or that parents could have borrowed money from factories to spend at grog shops, mortgaging the work of their little ones for weeks and months in advance, *at from ninepence to a shilling a week,* but this happened also. Even more barbarous, if possible, were the conditions of labor for children in the mines, where they toiled long hours for infinitesimal wages, shut out from the sunlight, cramped in narrow corridors, and were forced to pull coal cars like beasts of burden and were frequently beaten and frequently killed or injured.

Boys and girls who labored in these infernal hell-holes became prematurely stunted and old. The joy and buoyancy of youth was denied them, for when they emerged from the pits at the end of the long day, they were too exhausted to join in the games of their more fortunate fellows.

Such was the picture which presented itself to Shaftesbury. And what was the attitude of the industrial magnates of Great Britain toward his efforts to ameliorate these unspeakably ghastly conditions? They sought by every means in their power to thwart him, and their arguments, when read today, sound for all the world as though they had been presented to a Southern legislature in the twentieth century by a group of Southern manufacturers! It was unjust and unfair to interfere with industry; legislation on such a subject would curtail individual liberty; those who desired reform were meddlers, fakes, and frauds, and were actuated by selfish motives; curtailment of hours, improvement of working conditions, and the fixing of minimum age limits for children would ruin industry.

John Bright and Sir Robert Peel almost exhausted their large vocabularies in denouncing Lord Shaftesbury's Ten Hours Bill, and it was solemnly asserted that passage of the measure would mean reversion to barbarism (*sic*). The bill was passed, nevertheless. Then came the Mines and Collieries Act, and it was bitterly excoriated by spokesmen for the mining interests, who said, of course, that its passage would doom the entire mining industry. One opponent declared that "hundreds of children would be thrown out of employment, and hundreds of families driven to the workhouse." He added that as a county magistrate, he would "not be responsible for the public peace if the bill were carried into effect in its present shape." As passed, the bill worked nothing less than a revolution in conditions in the British mines. And it goes without saying that the dismal croakings of the coal barons that their industry would be destroyed, were not realized.

It has been well said that "Britain today is a different country because of Shaftesbury's life." There is a memorial to him in Piccadilly Circus, London, built entirely from public subscription, an earnest of the esteem in which this great benefactor of mankind is held by the masses of his countrymen, whose lot was so vastly improved when he carried their cause to victory over the implacable opposition of their employers.

The conditions under which children worked in England when Shaftesbury began his long fight were not duplicated in this country, but the situation in America was certainly bad enough, and the attitude of our manufacturers was substantially the same. Almost all of them fought the humanitarians who endeavored to obtain the passage of regulatory legislation, the invariable plea being that if little children were taken out of the mills and factories, it would seriously hurt business.

The situation was extremely bad in the South at the turn of the present century. In 1900, no fewer than 234,000 children between ten and fifteen years of age were employed in industry in the fifteen Southern and border states. At the beginning of 1903, the number of textile operatives under fourteen in the South was put at 30,000, with 20,000 under twelve.

A concerted drive for the enactment of child labor laws by the various Southern states was launched at this time, with such men as Edgar Gardner Murphy of Alabama and Dr. Alexander J. McKelway of Virginia in leading rôles. Murphy said with respect to the positively appalling conditions in many factories and mills: "I have seen and photographed children of six and seven years who were at labor in our factories for twelve and thirteen hours a day . . . I have seen them with their little fingers mangled by machinery and their little bodies numb and listless with exhaustion."

When those who wished to put an end to these barbarities presented child labor bills to the respective law-making bodies of the Southern states, Murphy asserted that representatives of the manufacturers "thronged the lobbies . . . in the effort to defeat such an elementary measure as the prohibiting of factory labor for children under twelve." The prohibition of such labor would deal a severe blow to Southern prosperity, they clamorously declared. Manufacturers who one day denied that the number of children under twelve in factories was large enough to make any difference, descended on the capitol the next in a determined effort to defeat a bill prohibiting such labor. Owing to the uncompromising attitude of the industrial potentates, the foes of child labor realized that a twelve-year limit was the best which could be obtained.

By the end of 1903, nearly every Southern state had some sort of child labor law on its books for the first time, thanks to the determined efforts of Murphy, McKelway, and their co-workers. These laws were, of

course, wholly inadequate, but they represented a distinct advance. Their passage was facilitated to some extent by the fact that virtually all the legislation was adopted within the space of two or three years, and it was therefore difficult for many Southern states to claim that they were being placed at a disadvantage in competing with neighboring states which had no child labor laws.

It would seem that there is a lesson here for those of us today who wish to secure the passage of more enlightened labor laws in the South. Great difficulties seem in the way of ratification of the Federal Child Labor Amendment by any more Southern legislatures, but a concerted drive on those legislatures for more stringent state laws having to do with both women and children in industry, should bring results. Why, for example, cannot those who favor an eight-hour law for women launch a coördinated campaign throughout Dixie? A process of education and propaganda will undoubtedly be necessary, if results are to be achieved. Pressure will have to be applied in the legislative districts, and the proposed law will have to be made an issue when the law-makers are elected. Candidates should be committed in advance, if possible. Passage of a reasonable statute in a number of states the same year would tend to deprive opponents of the argument that a limitation on hours of labor for women in one state would place that state's industries under a handicap in competition with its neighbors.

It is noteworthy that when the eight-hour law was introduced at the recent session of the Virginia Legislature, opponents in the various districts were far more active in writing and wiring their representatives than proponents. Various members said that whereas they had been importuned by many constituents to oppose the legislation, not one single constituent had asked them to vote for it. This was obviously due to the fact that there was no organization in the districts to stimulate activity on behalf of the bill, whereas the Virginia Manufacturers' Association was aggressively leading the opposition and having its members shower their representatives with protests. The answer would seem to lie in the formation of an agency in every Southern state which will seek to make proponents of socially desirable legislation more articulate. Such an organization has

just been formed in Virginia, and there are agencies in one or two other states which can perhaps address themselves to the same problem.

But it would seem essential that each state group secure sufficient funds to finance at least a part-time secretary, for the detail work involved in such an operation is too burdensome for anyone who has a full-time job already. Another important consideration is that the liberals in every state must coöperate wholeheartedly with union labor, if results are to be achieved. In the North, the liberals alone are frequently strong enough to secure the passage of progressive legislation, and so is union labor. In the South, on the other hand, neither group can hope to succeed without the other. Consequently, the closest collaboration is prerequisite to success.

A substantial element of the Southern press can be counted on to support such a movement. Speaking for Virginia, I can testify that at least a dozen of the state's foremost papers coöperated in the recent campaign for better legislation governing women in industry. In all likelihood, a similar story could be told in a number of other states, if a drive for a reasonable bill were launched.

It is not my thought that every Southern employer is an ogre, or that even a majority of them are ogres. I have not tried in the foregoing pages to paint a picture in black and white, with the industrialists of the South tinted a midnight hue. There are plenty of good men among them. But they do things in the mass which they would not countenance as individuals. They allow asociations to which they belong to adopt attitudes toward wage and hour legislation and toward unionization which are not only callous and cruel, but shortsighted into the bargain.

How can a continuation of the near-pauper wage scale and the unreasonable hours which prevail in so many Southern industries work to the ultimate advantage of the South as a whole, or to that of its industrialists? It is coming more and more to be recognized that the maintenance of prosperity is intimately linked with the maintenance of purchasing power. Some governmental or other agency is needed to fix a bottom for wages and a limit for hours, to the end that farsighted employers can maintain decent standards and thereby bring a sounder prosperity to the region and the country.

Now that the Wagner-Connery Act is expected to be declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, the South, long the most socially backward region of America, is about where it was in 1932, in so far as collective bargaining is concerned. One may argue, indeed, with a certain plausibility, that its position has in some respects grown worse under the New Deal. For technological improvements in late years have thrown thousands out of employment, and at the same time, the removal of industries from the North to the South, because of the inferior labor standards below the Potomac, is going forward at an accelerated pace, in view of the fact that Southern workers no longer enjoy the Federal protection they thought they had two years ago. Thus the Southern worker is being thrown out of a job, on the one hand, because of technological advances, and is being exploited, if he has work, on the other, while the Northern worker who had a job in a Northern factory or mill, goes on the bread line when that factory or mill moves to Dixie.

It seems hardly necessary to argue that the time has come when the South must bestir itself on behalf of decent wages, hours, and conditions of labor for its sons and daughters. A campaign such as the foes of child labor brought to a successful conclusion more than three decades ago must be organized. The opposition from reactionary employers must be submerged in a popular demand for more civilized standards.

HERE LIES ONE

S. S. Field

The two men standing on the unhealed scar of clay that was the path, uplooking in a kind of rigid and mutual despair, could have been a ruin of statuary or caryatids left thinly upon the hillside by some wretched and long since vanished civilization. They watched the red aeroplane circle the grove slowly in the the morning sun like a child's toy on a wire before it slanted off to the north, only their eyes following its vanishing—motionlessly, the way red sand would vanish through an hour glass. They stood so for a full minute before the jaws of the older man, the father, resumed a kind of measured chewing and then stopped again.

"He's done gone," the father said.

For nearly another full minute the other man said nothing, still watching where the red speck had been. There was about the two of them —about the doleful brims of their hats and about their overalls of a pale Pompeiian blue, thin and bulging at the knees and drooping at the seats—a quality of forlorn tragedy; yet about their narrow eyes and knotted fists, something of a desperate finality. About the younger man, particularly.

"Chicago," he said. "I'll go." He still watched the low sky to the north. "That's where that mail-order house is. And that World's Fa'r. I reckon I'll go," he said, "if he ain't back here by pickin' time."

"Hit's a right smart of a place," the father said. "What would you do when you got there?"

As if in answer and without apparent motion, the younger man's hand now held an open jackknife of more than ordinary size. He was whetting the blade on his palm, no longer looking at anything. Neither of them had moved for several minutes now, yet somewhere within their motionlessness the volition not to move had changed from watching the red aeroplane to a matter of waiting. They were waiting now for the girl who was climbing the slow rise of the path which wandered upward from the grove, across a dog-leg alfalfa field and up to the warped gray shanty above them. They were not looking at the girl: as if deliberately, as if propriety entered into it, as if she might be dressing or undressing instead of climbing the path toward them.

"I'd find him," the younger man said.

"Hit's a powerful big place," the other said. "How?"

"I'd find him," the son said. "Like they say them Injuns could find honey. I'd follow that-air little red bee of his'n till it lit."

Even the girl's walk was slow, watchful, prepared, as she approached the two. She had a plain face and a calm, capable body moving gracefully and easily and quite visibly beneath a single cotton garment which hung from her shoulders with the shapelessness of a flour sack and through which the morning sunlight could be seen.

"You go on down and harness," the father said. The son was a big-boned man with a high, hard face. He did not look at the girl as he passed her in the weeds.

"Give it here," the father said.

"I ain't got nothin'," the girl said.

"He throwed it to you," the father said. "Outen that airyplane. What was it, money?"

"It wasn't nothin'," the girl said. "It wasn't nothin' but a piece of paper. A piece of newspaper. I throwed it away."

The father turned and looked at the girl for the first time. "You lie," he said. "You hid it somewhere. He's done finished with you and gone and what he throwed at you was money. Look at yourself."

"He's comin' right back," the girl said. "There's plenty of time."

"I call upon the Lord," the father said, his voice beginning to rise. It was a powerful voice, welling forth from a massive interior like a cow's voice. "My own daughter. My own child. I call upon the Lord to witness."

The girl stood on solid bare legs, looking down at her stomach as a child would. "He said he'll be right back. He said last night he'll be right back. He's sailin' over there to Chicago and right back as soon as he can, and there's plenty of time," she said, looking at her stomach. "Why hit don't even show." She looked up and smiled with sudden surprise. "Why hit don't even show at all," she said, "and him comin' right back, too." She looked at the face of her father, at his mouth shaped for hog calling. It was the face of a gray stone image that had suddenly begun to hurl forth in booming resonance across the hollow a kind of terrible opera, biblical in tone, calling upon God and thunderously improvising from what appeared to be the marriage vows. But any who heard the name of Trent hurled across the hollow that morning knew that this was no hog calling.

The name of Trent had always meant a great deal more to the town than just a name, going deep into the past of the low-lying hills and beneath the surface of the land like roots. And through a hundred blazing Augusts with the vast unflagging patience of a well-fed mule and a well-fed nigger the land has turned up spiral rows of the endless big white cotton puffs shimmering and dancing in the heat, and the name of Trent has somehow been synonymous with all of that, too.

This was mostly before the War disrupted plowing. Before Horner Trent came back as the town's solitary hero (along with a handful of forlorn and strutful and outlandish negroes in piecemeal uniforms sadly depleted by dice games) to wear the town's only whipcord uniform and Sam Brown belt; to become the town's first equivocation between past and future, between the men and the women.

Because it was the women who failed to see what Horner Trent was doing to the town beneath his uniform; secretly translating their barren little lusts into something heroic at the very sight of his martial leather gear even after he had grown a little too large for it, a little too old for

that sort of thing, worn it a little too long. Maybe it was only the men who could see Horner Trent beneath his uniform.

He did no work. He was a big man, as his father had been, not quite tall enough for his thick neck and wide shoulders. He lived in a large old house in a grove about two miles out of town, with his sister Matty and a hard old griffon of an aunt, where the three of them would assemble at meal time and Horner and the aunt would curse each other with the slow deliberation of men and in language too hateful even for the kitchen negroes.

Matty Trent was small and dark and nearly pretty but for a soft down mustache. She was all of thirty the summer she announced her engagement to an Atlanta man. The three or four girls in the town who were her friends (all married and a trifle inferior socially) had already begun to be a little proud and protective of her, secretly glad of her desperation. Then one summer she went to visit a cousin in Atlanta (they said, "to make one last try for a man"), and when she came back she was engaged and so they said, "Now isn't that fine; isn't that jest fine; and such a fine name, Burlingame. Trust Matty Trent to have nothing but the best," and for the rest of the summer they could be seen driving in cars or strolling down the town's single shaded residential street, their arms entwined, Matty in the middle, their voices soft, mellow, private, secret and proud, and Matty a little too old for that sort of thing.

It was then, too, that their satisfied eyes would search skyward through the trees for the warlike sound that was often so close to the ground that the mules would burst their traces and they would say, "There he goes. I declare if he ain't jest the bravest thang."

Because it was in the spring of that year that Horner Trent bought the red aeroplane. He bought it from a pair of run-down barn-stormers who had stopped in a field near the town to sell rides for a dollar apiece. There were those who said that he had been drinking corn liquor that day. They said that he had the jug on the front seat of his car and a scared nigger named Scram in the back when he drove by and saw this aeroplane parked near the road with a cotton banner sign stuck up on two sticks and four or five men in overalls watching, and he drove on into town and stopped at the bank. They said that Scram must have known what was going to

happen because he tried to jump out of the car when Horner turned around and started back. They told the whole thing as a kind of poor joke, later: how he stopped and made Scram get in front with him where he couldn't jump out, and then roared on out of town with the cutout open.

They said that Scram followed him across the field at his heels like an already dead nigger walking to the gallows, and Horner said to the man, "How much is a ride in this crate?"

"A dollar," the man said.

"And how many rides are left in it?" Horner said.

"What do you mean?" the man said.

"I mean it ain't worth a damn," Horner said, "but do you reckon there are three hundred rides left in it?" They said it was pretty mean. They said that if you had been on the other side of a wall, only hearing the voices, you'd have known it was a Trent bargaining for something. They said that the little man with the dirty face and the pasteboard puttees scratched his head and smiled meekly.

"I don't know what you mean," he said, "but I guess there are more than that left in her."

"Four hundred?" Horner said. He was leering in the little man's face, shouting a little.

"I guess so," the man said. "I—"

"Well you've sold the damn thing. Here. Now get out of my way, and come on here, nigger, I'm going to take you up there and leave you."

They said that he handed the man something over four hundred dollars in rumpled cash and before the two little barnstormers knew what had happened he had pushed the thin black tragedy of Scram up into the front seat and had climbed in behind him with his jug of corn liquor and was fumbling with the controls. They said that the two fliers counted the money, murmuring to themselves and looking at each other and the old red aeroplane doubtfully several times, with Horner cursing the nigger and shouting, "Come on here and spin this damn propeller," and Scram just sitting there, only his head showing, thin and miserable, like a drowning mule's; and then the two men nodded to each other and finally one of them agreed to spin the propeller.

Because he had done some flying in the army. They said it was the sight of that nigger's face that made it mean. They said that he would dive the thing with the motor roaring and just miss the road and climb and come back and dive again, and they could see the nigger's face as it went by: backlooking, the mouth open, the teeth showing in a kind of lost scream, and the eyes rolled white. They said that he brought the thing down pretty roughly and lifted the jug to take a drink, and that the nigger climbed out and sat down on the ground with his head between his knees and cried; a tall nigger, a grown man. The men just walked away.

That was the beginning of it. The beginning of what it was that seemingly only the men could understand while the women, the girls, would worry about him and say how brave he was and remember how handsome he had once been in his lieutenant's uniform, without the coat, with the shirt open on his arrogant, thick neck. "There he goes," they would say, breathless. "I declare if he ain't jest the bravest thang."

It was the men who seemed to understand. The farmers. The gaunt, ragged men, many of them tenants on land that belonged to a Trent and working, from a habit generations old, cotton that belonged to a Trent, that belonged now to this last Trent who was seldom seen now without his jug of liquor and some terrorized negro at his heels; who was most often seen now roaring against the sky, a kind of symbol in red of treachery to his name and mockery to the earth below him and the people who labored upon it.

So it was the men who said, "He won't git killed. He'll kill someone else, but he won't git killed. Not him. Not in that machine, anyway." And they thought how it was as though the slow disintegration of the once proud family seemed to be taking a last stand, a last fling, a last defiance of everything simple in a red aeroplane with a jug of liquor and a terrified negro: thought how the power that a man may inherit does not change; only the man changes, growing stronger or breaking down, depending upon his fitness to handle power. And so it was the men who said, "Brave? Well maybe he's brave. And maybe he ain't brave. And no red flying machine will prove if he's brave. Because maybe he's a fool. And only his land will prove if he *is* a fool. And only a man can prove if he *is* brave."

So it was the men who wondered where his weakness was; what would finally prove it. Then there began to be talk about the Aaron girl. Her name was Charity Aaron.

For almost as many generations as there were Trents there had been Aarons. They were a nondescript race of tall, hard-boned, illiterate people, congenitally regilious, who had perpetuated a ruined, one-shanty civilization for nearly a hundred years on a bare knoll a little above and about a mile in back of the grove known as Trentwood. The knoll was grassless and of packed red clay. An archaeological mound into which had been ground, like ruin upon ruin, the old pots and pans of successive Aaron generations and upon which stood (or leaned) a paintless gray shanty seeming to surpass everything else on earth in dilapidation, like a planned effect: like something achieved through the studied efforts of the ancients and comparable almost to a ruined temple, a kind of Parthenon sagging through the ages and made of boards and mud.

Charity Aaron had the full developed body of a barefooted figure in a stained glass window by the time she was fourteen years old, with strong legs and that peculiar grace about the ankles of a barefooted girl. She was seventeen the summer Matty Trent announced her engagement. By that time the negroes had watched and waited for three years with the tranquil indomitability of seers.

Because for three years it was the negroes who had seen her descend the path with buckets of milk for the Trent kitchen and sometimes she would remain in the evening, sitting on a cane-bottom chair in the kitchen, turning the pages of a mail-order catalogue or a seed catalogue with the profound rapture of a child, looking at the pictures and spelling out the words to herself.

And so it was the negroes who would have known first even if they hadn't been there to see the beginning of it: the day Horner Trent stood in the stable door and looked at Charity Aaron.

"Jes' about like when his ole man stood in the same place and looked up and down her ole lady," they said. "Only there warn't no big ole mean-face brother of her'n that time like there is now, and ain't that too bad," they said. They told about it.

"And her standin there with nothin' on but that flour sackin' and him in them awmy pants and them no-count spurs from ridin' that horse most to death, and wuckin' around till he can git the sun behind her and then sayin', 'come here, honey,' like butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. And her with no mo' sense than to go. Look like them ignunt white people would speak to they chillun. And him so *nice,*" they said, even the backs of their heads indignant. "And him so *nice*. Look like it's jes too bad she kain't keep him that way," the negroes said. By the time Horner bought the aeroplane the talk was well advanced.

There is no daily newspaper in the town. The number of people who could stand the strain of reading or trying to read on seven consecutive days each week is not sufficient to support the cost of printing the words, so the town reads on only one day each week the Cotton County *Planter*. So that between Tuesday and Tuesday—or whatever day after Tuesday the weekly paper happens to come forth with a proud little flourish—local news travels by telephone and muleback and Ford and foot, without editorial censorship and with a thoroughness and rapidity that would be the envy of the Associated Press. In this manner, and with kitchen negroes for foreign correspondents, the talk was well abreast of the condition on the day that old man Aaron climbed the outside stairway to the office of the Cotton County *Planter*. Some of the people had seen him carrying his high stone image through the town with his Frankenstein stride, his air of terrible finality. They saw him climb the stairs and then they heard his voice overflow the printing office with the sound of singing or prayer, as if the hollow voice of a deaf man were being raised in torment.

"Six—ty four years I've been a hard workin', God fearin' man. Six—ty four years in the sight of the Lord and the Lord has done showed me the way!" They said that his voice carried the length of the town (he had been a man of some renown at calling hogs) and they said that all business seemed to cease, people sitting or standing wherever they were, heads cocked, listening while he demanded in tragic opera that public notice of his daughter's betrothal be printed in the weekly paper, calling upon God to witness that His will would be done before the eyes of the people.

"And the ears too, I reckon," the editor said.

"That goes hard for Charity Aaron," some of the men said. "Either way and hit still goes hard," they said. They didn't laugh. The lean, gnarled men with ragged overalls and the faces of Christ didn't laugh. Spitting, their eyes leveling off under sweat-stained hats, they were thinking that there was one man with whom Horner Trent must yet come face to face; one tall, big-boned, silent man of Horner Trent's generation whose face had never betrayed his thinking and whose actions had never betrayed his face. They were thinking of Luke Aaron, Charity Aaron's brother, and they remembered how it had been said that he once took a pair of pliers and pulled out his own back teeth.

That afternoon the editor drove out to see Horner Trent. He found him sitting on his veranda with the jug of corn liquor beside him. He was pretty well along for that time of day. "It's about old man Aaron," the editor said.

He said that Horner just looked at him through insulting, half-closed eyes, and listened. Then slowly his eyes opened, turning back on themselves in calculation.

"Well what of it?" Horner said.

"Not that there is any incumbency upon our poor tired linotype machine to set up such a story," the editor said. "It's in awful bad shape, that machine . . . On the other hand, I guess we ain't in any position to refuse paid public notices . . . needing a new linotype machine as badly as we do."

The editor said that Horner just looked at him, blear-eyed, while he figured that one out. (The editor was a slight man, sixty, beyond any remaining fear of physical violence; he was known to have once shot a man in a political altercation, smiling and cooing sweetly in the voice of a little old lady, and firing point blank.) Horner looked at him. "What do you mean?" he said.

"I mean that I'm looking down your throat, Horner," the editor said gently. "In poker parlance, the raise is a linotype machine. And by the way, Horner. It may interest you to know that Luke Aaron was in town yesterday. He was observed to purchase at the hardware store one twelve-gauge shotgun shell of number four chilled shot and an inferior grade of pocket knife with a four-inch blade."

The next morning Horner Trent was gone. "Chicago," Matty explained. "He flew. That's jest like Hawner. He's been wanting to see that Cintry of Progress, so he jest naturally got up before breakfast and got in that thang and was gone."

"I declare, if he ain't jest the wildest thang," the girls said.

Cotton picking begins in the early part of September. Then the days are hot and cloudless and the late afternoon sun has already begun to give forth a quality of light that is like a mood, a subtle regret, a little tranquil and remote. Then on the roads can be seen the peaceful wagons with the high sides, heaped with cotton for the gins, and on the highways even a few trucks which now rush swiftly to stand in line among the wagons, a little ridiculously, for after all that time in the growing (and with a government bonus even being paid out for that which didn't grow) it doesn't much matter whether you're first in line, or last.

It was on such a day as this that a wagon, not even a truck, returning empty from the gin, stopped to pick up a man in worn overalls and a store-bought coat who was sitting beside the road on a pasteboard suitcase, honing his knife. The driver of the wagon was a dirt farmer who lived on a small tract of wilderness about seven miles north of the town. He recognized the other man as Luke Aaron. "How fer are you goin' ?" he said.

"Chicago," Luke said. He climbed up beside the driver.

"That's the first time I ever knowed there was a Chicago in this state," the man said. "Cubup-hyah!"

"Maybe it ain't," Luke said. "Maybe I'm a-goin' to that World's Fa'r."

The other man looked at him. "You're startin' out mighty fast," he said. "You reckon that Fa'r will wait on these here mules?"

"How fer is it?" Luke said.

"Oh I reckon hit's around about seven thousand miles. Let's see. We'll do the seven miles to my place in two hours and a half and then you add that times a thousand."

"Maybe I'll ketch me one of them little red airyplanes," Luke said.

"Oh," the man said. "Oh." He looked at Luke. "Or maybe I'd ought to speak to them mules," he said. "Cubup-hyah!" They rode on in silence.

That was in September. The elder Aaron had gone on working Miss Matty's cotton and his own spare acre of knoll land, visible daily against the sloping land or silhouetted against the sky, a huge, bent, silent figure in the distance, more a symbol than a man. He was seen only once more in the town, passing through the center of it on his way to the gin with half of a wagon load of his own cotton (poor grade stuff, matted with clay), his eyes fastened rigid in the terrific head behind which he wore, as though insigniant of his shame, a hand-squared haircut.

Regularly now, once or twice each week, Matty Trent received boxes of flowers sent direct from Atlanta, marked "Fragile" and "Rush," and there were letters (on which postage had been dissipated for "Special Delivery") and the girls gave parties for Matty, showers, and her bright, faintly mustached little face would be seen quietly satisfied among the voices and faces of the others in an identical succession of galvanized hysterias like one meeting after another of cheer leaders. And Matty a little too old for that sort of thing.

So the women talked about Matty's approaching marriage while the men discussed the cotton and prices and yields and underneath it all they waited and thought how the last man of the Trents had betrayed his own name and his land, and been driven off by a tenant. Not because of the girl; because of himself. "I reckon he ain't the first Trent to climb that hay loft for no good purpose," they said. "But he's the first one of them that wasn't man enough to handle his own trouble, and that's because he wasn't man enough to handle his own power, breakin' down under the one and runnin' out from under the other," they said. "And even a hound dog knows a weaker animal when it sees one." And they thought of Luke Aaron.

But there was nothing new to talk about until the first of October. Then one day they learned that old man Aaron had set out in the Trent truck to get a pedigreed bull that the aunt (she ran the affairs of Trentwood) had bought by correspondence from a stock farm near Atlanta. He took Charity Aaron with him. It was known that old Aaron had relatives somewhere in that part of Georgia, and so when three days later he returned with the bull and without Charity, they said, "The poor thang. She'll about stay there," they said. "She'll jest about stay there for a *few* months, anyway. Let's see, July, August, September ——"

They were still counting when, one afternoon two weeks later, Charity Aaron descended from the train, wearing a store dress and carrying a new pasteboard suitcase. Those who were looking at her face saw that it was even bright and eager, as if she were glad to get back, as they watched her walking gingerly in store shoes and carrying her suitcase. Instead of taking the dirt road toward Trentwood, however, she walked (almost daintily now, as if on tiptoe) between the town's two lines of store fronts, pausing now and then to change hands on the suitcase and to look past the street loungers, a little eagerly and a little surprised. She climbed the outside stairway to the office of the Cotton County *Planter* and asked to speak to the editor. "The printer," she said, still holding the suitcase.

"Set it down," the editor said. "Before it sets you down. Did you want to see me?"

"I'll jest hold it," she said. "My. That big train nearabout shook me to pieces. Why, I'm married," she said. "I thought you might want to print about it. I'm married. I'm Miz Webster. Miz Dan Webster of Atlanta. I figured you might wish to print about it. He's well off," she said as though a little bewildered. "I reckon he's right well off, you can say. I've come back to git ready to move. Up to Atlanta. You can just say that he'll be here after me next month when his business is cleared up." She smiled brightly. "I allowed you might want to print about it," she said.

"Well ain't that fine," the editor said. He looked at her queerly. "Mrs. Dan Webster. Now ain't that fine, and I certainly will run a notice about it, Mrs. Webster."

"I'll thank you if you would," she said. He watched her leave, awkwardly, smiling backward over her shoulder.

"Mrs. Daniel Webster," he said to himself, watching her go. "Let's see. He has been dead now over seventy years. And I reckon at that he's a superior choice to Horner. If I were only younger," he thought. "What a story . . ."

Lugging the suitcase and carrying her shoes in her hand, she walked the three miles out to the Parthenon where even from the roadway could be seen the figure of her father, a massive stooped statue of loneliness and bewilderment and unbelief, watching her progress up the path.

The notice was beautiful, she thought, spelling out the words slowly, aloud, feeling the huge vacancy of her father's face—the dumb bewilderment awakening slowly like a dazed suspicion forming on the face of a mammoth—while she spelled aloud the announcement of her marriage to Mr. Daniel Webster of Atlanta, Georgia.

Because on that day, Tuesday, she had walked back to town in her store dress and shoes to buy the newspaper; to read aloud that night to her father who sat mutely in the lamplight, barefooted, his great palms on his knees . . . And then one day the flowers came. That was when people began to smile: wisely, with one eye shut. It was too good for coincidence. The package was marked "Flowers, Fragile, Rush," and addressed to Mrs. Daniel Webster, in care of Mr. Ajax Aaron, in care of Miss Matty Trent.

"Why ain't they sweet," she said. "Why ain't they jest sweet."

"She's imitating," they said. "She's not married at all and she's making believe she is, to cover her shame, and she's imitating Matty Trent the way a child would." And then they set to work and figured the whole thing out: figured out how she had planned the whole thing when she was away, even arranging to have the flowers sent, and they thought, "And what a bitter pill for Matty Trent, to suffer this irony of her brother's shame." And just when they had the whole thing figured out, she upset their predictions again.

For on the following Monday they saw her once more walking into town, this time slowly, not at all bright and surprised and eager, as if she must have known that her shame had found her out or as if (some of them claimed later to have observed) she were play-acting at sorrow. She went once more to the newspaper office.

"He's dead," she said to the editor. "I figured you might wish to print about it. My husband is dead." She looked away, wringing her hands slowly. The editor was very gentle with her, only his eyes sparkling a little. "I figured you might wish to print about it," she said. "A man brought me the word today in a big car. His brother did. Just say that he died sudden . . . of the fever. Just say they're a-shippin' his body here," she said. "For buryin'. I reckon the funeral will be about Friday. I'd thank

you," she said. She left without looking back, wretched and childlike. The editor watched her go.

"They are shipping Daniel Webster here," he said. "They are ——. Well what . . . do you know about that!"

For two weeks now old Aaron had sat each night by the lamplight, silent, watching his daughter with emptiness and unbelief on his face. It was nearly three months since his only son had taken the road toward Chicago. Sitting in the hollow evenings, alone with the changing shape of his daughter, old Ajax Aaron had become a great tired mass of disillusionment and prayer. Then he would make her read to him from the torn fragments of an Old Testament, make her kneel with him beside the table, calling upon the Lord in meaningless inventions of prayer while he watched her face and waited for something to happen that he could understand. For two weeks nothing happened.

Then one night at the turn of the weather old Aaron sat beside the glowing lattices of the cook stove, watching his daughter. Outside the wind came up in fitful gusts, dying away and coming back again as if lost in the restless world. He watched his daughter and half thought how his life too had changed into something lonely and cold, thinking, "I am an old man. Sixty-four years without nothin', and now this." Thinking then, "She's writin'. My daughter appears to be writin'. She ain't never done this before. She appears to be writin' off. Now why?"

For several minutes he watched her sitting in the gusty lamplight, working with a stub of a pencil and a piece of smudged tablet paper. She had beside her the opened mail-order catalogue. "Hit's the Atlanta one," he thought. "And she's writin' off." He watched her secretly for a while, then he went to the water bucket and drank. Moving then noiselessly across the boards in his sock feet, he stood for a moment behind her, looking down at the penciled letters on the page and the catalogue picture upon which she held her finger. He could neither read nor write beyond the memorized drawing of what he knew to be his own name; it was the picture beneath which her finger traced a tedious journey, that caused him to speak, caused him to think, "So. She will tell me now. I have called

upon the Lord and now she will tell me." She looked up suddenly, covering the picture with her hand.

He was not looking at her. "You will tell me now," he said quietly. "For you have been lyin' to me. You have been lyin' to your own father and I have called upon the Lord and now He has answered hit in the handwritin' of a child. You have been lyin' to me," he said.

So that night she told him. Sitting beside the gulping lamp, feeling the humble vacancy of his face; feeling the restless night and the hills beyond which lay somewhere Chicago and some sort of World's Fair with livestock and poultry, probably, and prize ears of corn, she told him, hiding her simple face and eyes in her dress.

"And so hit was money he gave you," old Aaron said.

"Yes," she said. "He said he'd be right back. He said he was jest sailin' over to Chicago and right back, and he didn't come."

"And now the Lord has done showed us the way," old Aaron said. And that night they prayed long and hard.

The weather had changed. Now the days were crisp and bright with the sterile light of November. For three such days after the account of Mrs. Daniel Webster's bereavement appeared in the Cotton County *Planter,* people watched the two of them, Charity and her father, drive into town behind the two mules. They were dressed for an occasion, sitting in the wagon with somber, patient decorum for three successive days at the depot while the Atlanta train came and went and there was no casket for Mrs. Daniel Webster; no Mr. Daniel Webster.

So that by the fourth day the handful of station loiterers who daily met the afternoon train had swelled to the proportions of a crowd, while old Aaron and his daughter sat in solemn formality above them on the wagon seat, motionless, not talking, waiting.

It came on the fourth day. Even as the afternoon train blew and charged in with a rush of cinders, the long crate could be seen in the opened door of the baggage car, the crowd could be heard to murmur and move forward. Old Aaron backed his mules until the tail gate of the wagon came opposite the door, then he rose to his full height, standing in the wagon bed, and removed his hat.

It was easily done—with the wagon right there and the freight agent and the baggage man and two or three of the men to help slide the long box through the door and onto the wagon, and then they watched them drive off, the two of them side by side, one huge, one small: watched them sitting together in churchlike humility as they drove slowly away with the oblong crate.

The crowd had moved down to the end of the cinders, still watching, the men still holding their hats, when the freight agent suddenly spoke. He stood on the platform above them, scratching his head with the hand that held his eyeshade and reading from a paper which he held in his other hand. This was the receiving agent's copy of an express company waybill. It bore the names of shipper and consignee, the Atlanta mail-order house and Mrs. Daniel Webster—"express prepaid." Then partly in printed form and partly in penciled carbon it read: "This Shipment contains 1 boxed hardwood Coffin and contents. Contents of Coffin, 150 lbs. Colonial Yellow Barn Paint. Value, $15.00.

WM. CRANE

Manson Radford

A FEW NEGRO CHILDREN, happy in the dust, stirred a little idle movement along the unpaved block. A white man, at one end, was knocking at each of the low, weathered houses that lay huddled in the sun. Like a marionette dancing he walked across the bright scene. Knock, wait, move down one. He worked rapidly with an air of clear intention. If the front door on the gallery was shuttered he would not trouble to knock. The space between each house and the next formed an alley, behind a closed door that rose above his head. When he pulled at the wooden handle of a bell wire running through the door jamb and along the house to the rear, a bell tinkled or rattled distantly. The sound died, and if there was no response or the shuffle of no feet within, he pushed open the door. With his fist he would pound on the clapboard side of the house until the disturbance echoed and reëchoed through every room. Sometimes he would chuckle at the sign on so many doors—"Beware Bad Dog." It amused him to think of strangers, and himself so recently, rendered cautious with a little paint.

At one house near the center of the block it was not necessary to announce himself, and he was pleased.

"Well, well, well," he said, "that's fine. Here you are. Luck for both of us. Luck for you and luck for me."

He took his hat off and wiped his forehead in the steaming sun. He was standing on the sidewalk, but the gallery was so small that he spoke in a conversational tone. She leaned on her elbows watching him through the

open window and he could see her weak breasts under the sleazy print she wore.

"Doggone if I wasn't wondered what had become of you," he continued, coming up onto the gallery. "Didn't know but what you'd got yourself another man and gone away. I didn't know," he grinned at her. "You never can tell these days what the women'll do. Isn't that right . . . Mary?"

The set of her face broke under the pressure of his patter; changed, shifted itself, but no expression came.

"Mary . . ." The name hung on one finger exploring the fatness of his debit book, "Ah. Here she is. No . . . Marie. Marie Dufouchard, Widow. That's it, isn't it? Or which are you? Mary or Marie or eeny, meeny, meiny, moe?" When he laughed he opened his mouth wide, so that his regular teeth and cropped red moustache and black tortoise shell glasses seemed all one thing. They matched themselves like lead soldiers marching in bright colors.

For he was neat. If his seersucker suit was frayed a little at the cuffs, it had been properly laundered and was still clean. In his carriage and in his dress he indicated himself as a man with a wary eye. Here and there he had been forced to surrender a point or two, but with the proper honors. He never would be caught unawares by time and routed—by no fair means. His gray hair had begun to thin but it was plastered back courageously without grease and his belt checked at his waist a tendency toward flesh. If the conflict appeared in his face, in the prim eyes and obscure mouth, the answer was politely concealed. Or at least decently covered—by activity and a simple spirit.

He pushed open the door and entered the room. She turned to face him and he saw how thin she was. Her body was drawn until there were hardly any breasts and no arms, beyond bone and a little tight skin. Even the nostrils curled back like dead magnolias rotted blue. Hell, he wondered. Proper niggers are fat—or laughing. Under its immediate concern his mind was groping. And he remembered a sensation, without the image, of the empty eyes of staring children. Or some similar time when his words caught on nothing and hung nowhere.

"Yes, Sir. Now let's see. Here we are. It is a nice name, come to think of it. Paid . . . paid . . . paid . . ." He flipped the pages with one hand while he held the book, that was thicker than his fist, in the other.

"Well . . . you are a good one. Never behind at all until just lately. Something a person ought to be proud of, I don't mind telling you at all." He spoke pleasantly, not pressing her for any response when she did not answer. She was still standing where she had turned from the window, but now not even watching him. Instead her eyes strayed, anywhere away from the strange face that was in her bedroom. He had taken one of the soiled overstuffed chairs and put his hat on the small table beside him.

He was almost startled when she spoke, or it may have been her sudden movement.

"Mis' Bougereaux done gone?" she said distantly and carelessly, so that the inflection dropped between a question and a statement. Her words were barely a separate thing from the disjointed swing of her body as she moved across the room.

"Bougereaux?" He was puzzled, holding one finger to mark his point on the page. "Oh . . . him. He sure is, lady. That's my job now. Though maybe you and me'd both be lot better off where he is. Unless St. Peter's trying to collect a debit on him." He laughed entirely, all over, at his joke, and then laughed again to include her.

He asked to see her card indicating the records of her payments and she brought it to him. She kept it in one of the drawers of the low dresser and she had to rummage far back to find it. She laid it down on the table with a one dollar bill and a quarter. It was ruled evenly in horizontal spaces, with divisions for the date, the amount of each payment, and the agent's name. He looked at the money on the table and, taking out his fountain pen, he signed his name with the easy flourish of the professional five times. It was always a pleasure when he received so many payments at once. His name was not long and the *Wm. Cranes,* one above the other, formed a neat solid block, very different from the illegible *Bougereauxs* above.

"Okay, sister, there she is." He flipped the card back to her across the room. "Now you've got to watch yourself and don't get behind again. I tell you, you'd feel mighty bad to lose a fine policy like that."

"Look, 'yere. You ain't fix me right," she said, before he could record the payments. She studied the card intently. "You say I'se two weeks a'hind you yet. You ain't fix this card right." She brought the card over for him to see.

He waved her away, that she might not interfere with the entries he was making. "Of course it's right. Five quarters—five weeks."

"No, it ain't neither." She held her ground, still absorbed with the simplicities of the card. "They's two times you gotta sign yet."

"Now look here," he snapped his debit book shut and took the card from her. He explained, cheerfully regarding the black face before him. He ran over simply for her the regulations of the company. Bougereaux, he said, had paid two weeks for her. With the five that she was behind, that made seven. She had just made up five, leaving two. When he spoke it was with a confidential air and he addressed her personally as though the two together were joined against the powers of confusion and officialdom. Bougereaux had been trying to help her, he had lent her money of his own and it must be repaid. He did not attempt to conceal that it was to the agent's advantage to lend money when there was a chance of saving the policy. Honesty, he had often said, was the best policy; square and aboveboard with everybody and a man will learn to read a bank book, was the way he used to express it.

"An' you gonna fix it?" she asked when he had finished. He was exasperated. She spoke simply, as though merely to indicate polite attention to his words.

"Now! Now, Marie." He began again. "You must listen. You're not as dumb as that. Money is money, you know that. When you borrow, you must pay it back."

She looked at him attentively and with interest for the first time. Slowly her features softened into a grin that exposed her discolored teeth, as though she were at last satisfied and pleased at the result of her scrutiny. Before she spoke she looked away and started to chuckle until she was almost laughing.

"Shuh," she said and then again. "Shuh. Fo' bits t'a de'd ma'n!" Her amusement rippled through her words and spilled over, seeming to lose itself in the room, until she focused it quickly for him in a simple grin. Irresistibly he was forced to join her and to smile.

But he checked himself and spoke sharply. He explained again that though she only owed the company five quarters, she owed Bougereaux the two that he had paid for her. And that since he was acting in Bougereaux's

place it was his duty to collect the debt and see that the money was disposed of properly. When he paused she still inspected his face closely with oblique eyes.

"So you see?" he continued. "I can't sign the two weeks for you. It would be wrong. And that's all there is to it. But now don't you worry. You'll make that little up in no time at all and you'll be all jake again."

When he finished, she turned her eyes away from his face and then her body more slowly, and walked across the room to the door.

"God dam' cheatin' w'ite ma'n," she said with her back to him. She mumbled her words passionately but experimentally, as though she were addressing an indifferent god. ". . . a cheatin' w'ite ma'n." At the door she turned and stood before it with crossed arms. He could not tell if she were waiting for him to speak or whether she intended to bar the door.

"Here, here now. You." He addressed her sternly. "Don't you go talking like that. You got to keep a civil tongue in your head. That's no way to talk to anybody." He held his body together fiercely and glared at her, as some men hold a poker hand when the bets are all in.

She mumbled, "Ain' talkin' to nobody," and relaxing, he indicated that he accepted it, with her hesitating eyes, as an apology.

"All right. I can't stop here all morning. I got a lot of business. Have you got any receipts from Bougereaux? If you haven't I can't help that and I can't sign your card."

"Receipts?" she repeated as though it were a new idea in her mind. "Maybe I has. I'll look where it is the papers are."

She rummaged again in the low dresser but discovered nothing. Leaving the room, she picked up the dollar that still lay on the table. He could hear her in the rear opening and closing drawers. When she returned she shook her head.

"Very well," he said and put on his hat. He slipped the quarter from the table and dropped it into the canvas bag that he wore at his waist. "Now give me that dollar and you'll be settled up for today."

"Dol'ah?" she asked leaning against the door into the rear room. "Done paid my dol'ah. You got it there. An' you ain' goin' to cheat me, w'ite ma'n. You goin' to fix that card right too."

He cursed her then. He stood by the table shaking his fist at her and shouting until his voice died away slowly while his eyes picked up the short barreled revolver. The muzzle of the gun was a few feet in front of his eyes and the light glinted around the edges of the barrel so that the bore was a black perfect circle. When he thought of it afterwards he had always the feeling that he ought to have touched the woman, ought to have put his hands on her violently in some way. But he could not even see her then. He never saw her eyes, nor understood exactly the words she used. He heard her laughing hysterically and he knew that the names she was calling him were obscene.

"You better put down that gun," he said, words returning with his body as he moved. "You don't dare use it. Put down that gun!" he said again, "and stop this nonsense!"

When he stepped toward her it was without intention other than to emphasize his words. He heard the hammer strike and saw the muzzle twitch upward at the same time. The separate sensations confused him for an instant and he could not immediately join the two into comprehension. He saw her black face then, brilliant in its steady rage, at the same moment he understood that she had tried to shoot him. Fear and anger surged over him so that the two were indistinguishable, separating his body from feeling or will. He did not realize that he was running until the returning houses grew black in the street and he forced himself to stop. It was not until after he had put in a call for the police from the grocery on the corner that he began to wonder if he had been struck.

There was nobody there when they returned and seeing the room again, so dull and cheap and empty, he felt a little weak. The taller officer went through the door into the rear and he helped himself into the soft, soiled chair where he had been sitting to talk with her before. With a gun . . . she had tried to kill him. Not over fifty cents. There must have been something else, and besides he had been right about that. He wanted to assist the officers in some way, but there was nothing he could think of to do. He explained how it happened over again to the one called Shorty, who was searching the room, pulling all the bed clothes apart and turning out all the drawers without bothering to put anything back. They did not look like very efficient police. Rather like indifferent railroad conductors.

Shorty had a great belly that made him ridiculous on his knees peering under the bed. Were the police in all Southern cities like that, he wondered. And impudent . . . she had been impudent too, and had called him filthy names. Though she had been hysterical then. But trying to kill him . . . it was madness. The thought disturbed him for a moment. He tried to think carefully, but he could not recall any evidence of insanity in her conversation with him. He would testify to that. She had been entirely normal. He could take oath on that.

When the taller officer returned he brought the negro woman by the arm and pushed her into a chair by the door. At the sight of her he felt himself grow excited again and his eyes grasped eagerly at the face he could not remember. He felt that before she was sentenced to her punishment he must know exactly what she looked like and what she was. But sullenly she kept her head down. She was sobbing a little without tears and he heard, for the first time, a child crying in the rear. He realized that he was sitting strained, awkwardly in the chair, and he made himself lean back. He felt a little foolish and angry with the police for not taking her away and getting the whole thing over with.

"Nothing in here," Shorty said, sitting on the rumpled bed. "You find anything?" The other shook his head and they both looked at him.

"She pulled a gun on you? You sure?"

He explained to them again, carefully. She had tried to kill him. She had pointed a gun at him and pulled the trigger. The hammer had clicked. But the gun had failed to fire. It was a thirty-eight.

"A thirty-eight?" The fat man on the bed seemed interested for the first time. "How do you know it was?"

He could not think about that clearly. He repeated that it was a thirty-eight, he knew.

"Maybe it wasn't loaded?" the other said, idly, still standing by the negress. "Maybe she just got worked up and thought to scare you a bit? Eh? What about it you . . .?" He poked her in the arm. "You. What's your name. Come on, say something."

Her name was Marie, Marie Dufouchard, he told them again.

"Well, what about it Mary?" the tall one continued not ungently. "Come on. We don't want no trouble now. Open that black mouth of yours."

She seemed to be considering with herself, miserably.

"It's lying," she said finally in a low voice, without raising her eyes. "It's all lyin'. I never. He's a cheatin' ma'n." She looked up suddenly and straight at him so that he had to drop his eyes. She spoke out.

"He done stole a dol'ah an' fix my cah'd like I never paid him. He's lyin' and fixin' to take my in'suh'nce."

He heard the crack of her head as it hit the back of the chair. He sat up suddenly, rigid. Her eyes were wider than any he had ever seen and her mouth stood partly opened in stupid fear. He could see across her lips and over half her cheek, even through the black of her skin, the wide marks where the open palm had struck. Fearfully she made no sound. The man by her seemed hardly to have moved. And neither of them looked at him. They waited silently, watching her without interest.

He lost control of himself after that. Leaping to his feet he shouted at them. He cursed them for brutal louts. Goddam dirty bums unfit to be policemen. Why didn't they take her to jail? That was their business. Who did they think they were, beating women and obstructing justice? He'd report them, by Christ, he said, if it was the last living thing he did. Let them get stuck in a cell with a nigger woman and see how they'd like that!

But his hysteria passed quickly, finding no response. The excitement that had induced it left him weak and uncertain on his feet, so that he had to support himself with one hand on the arm of the chair. The taller one said, "You take him outside, Shorty."

The fresh air helped him and after they reached the precinct station he felt better able to act in a dignified manner. When the desk sergeant charged the woman with disorderly conduct and asked him if there were anything else he controlled himself. He repeated his version of the story again and said simply that it seemed to him considerably more than a matter of disorderly conduct. Shorty came forward to explain that the woman wouldn't talk and that they had not been able to find any gun. But he laid a cartridge on the desk for the sergeant to see. They had found it on the floor as they were leaving, he said. It was a thirty-eight and there was an indentation in the primer where the firing pin had struck without discharging it. The sergeant held it in his fingers, turning it slowly around to catch the light from all sides, and rubbing it on his sleeve to inspect the

indentation. He nodded his head then in confirmation and wrote down "assault with attempt to kill."

"Okay," he said, "that's it, I reckon."

But it was not to be so after all. When he reached the office the District Manager was quite firm, pointing out that the company could not afford to incur any ill will. And a colored preacher called that night who spoke very earnestly of the economic and cultural position of the negro people, and offered to make arrangements about Marie.

Afterward it often astonished him to think how quickly everything had changed. He wrote three new policies the first day in that one block. He would have walked by Marie's house without stopping. But she came out to speak to him, calling from the little gallery as he stood in the street. She was dressed in the same dirty cotton she had worn before and her black eyes and mouth watched him thoughtfully. The Rev. Jones had fixed it for her to move, she said.

"So's I won't bother you no more," and she grinned at him.

She asked if he would please see that her policy was transferred to the new district, and, when he said that he would, she thanked him.

SILENCE

Raymond Dannenbaum

THE SPACE of disaster was a white hospital room, and its plane was a bed of white enamel. And in such space and on this plane he would live as long as he could live.

At night the room was no longer a glare of white, but only a pale depth which touched at a single point of tangent—his memory—the world of light and shadow outside. And on that night the room, except for the bed which he filled and an area of dark enclosing the white gown of the nurse sitting at the bedside, was the frailest nimbus of substance that surrounded and sustained the metal shell of the nearby lamp. In the closet, two lengths of arm away, were enamelled pans, and there was a basin with two faucets and a drain. No flowers were in the room, but the scent of the gardens in the rain outside drifted in to enchant him with the thought of walking under the palms growing there. Dimly he could see the varnish of the chart-board at the foot of his bed, and he knew that its paper bore two oblique lines: the ascending graph of his temperature and the high wave of his pulse. The chart-board mapped for him the size of the room, which diminished at evening, and which might grow again at morning. And the chart itself contained a prescience of the encroaching boundary of Time.

He had been trying to sleep in this room for two weeks now.

"Would you like a drink of water?" asked the nurse.

"Yes." He sucked on the glass tube which she pressed between his lips. The water slowly illuminated him with its cold. He compressed his

cheeks and it rose in a gush to cool the hot roof of his mouth; and then when he drew his cheeks out, it found in a fine trickle the burning stalk of his throat. The water descended like the slow run of sap down a tree in autumn, and finally he knew its cool inside of him, under the hands folded on his waist. She wiped his lips. "Nurse," he said, "water tastes good."

"More?"

"Please." And this time the water seemed to go farther, as if the pleasant pain of its iciness sifted through the walls of his stomach and into the valves of the feeble heart, and pushed out through the network of arteries into their thready termini at his fingertips. "Water *is* good," he said.

"Yes, isn't it."

And presently he heard a sloshing as she rinsed the glass in the closet basin; the drain gurgled and the water was gone.

"Just one more sip?" And at last he whispered, "Nurse, water is so very good that we mustn't ever waste it." And then, "Let's go for a ride in search of more water."

"All right," she said, "that's fun; let's ride in the rain!"

"We'll ride through the whole city in a green limousine. And we'll stop at the joining of every street. And we'll take a drink at every corner —four glasses for every time we stop. Isn't that fine?"

"Indeed."

"We'll ride forever, and we'll drink a great many glasses full."

"Yes?"

"Water is so very good," he murmured, "water is so very sweet."

Not farther away than the ceiling of this room, the wheels of the car —which had been spinning up hills and careening down narrow streets to stop at every intersection—were braked, more quickly than ever before. Momentum snatched one like himself out of the driver's seat and whipped him through the flare of an arc, as shallow as the sweep of his hand, into the bed once more. Very quietly he pulled his hand from under the sheet and into the light-path from the lamp. He flexed the fingers, and rubbed their tips together.

"Is anything wrong?" the nurse asked.

"If I didn't have hands, then it would be difficult to drink again," he explained . . . "What is my pulse?"

She approached the bed and in two fingers encompassed the wrist which now lay by his side. "You're getting better."

And then he asked, "What time is it?"

"Nine o'clock."

"Is that all?" . . .

He remembered being told that it is customary to recapitulate, during the last instants before death, the lifetime which a man is about to leave. This he found untrue, for the sheets seemed undulating warmth, and while little rivers trod the length of the windowpanes, obscuring palm fronds which he wished to touch with his own hands, those hands rested secluded by his thighs. Rising bands of impression oscillated along their immovable girth. If the room could go on being impersonal for so long, it did not matter, for the solstice was as yet unpassed. "Winter is still here," he said aloud.

She touched his forehead.

Even if the rain did include the entire peripheral space of the unseen sky, he could still bask on the sand which dribbled through his fingers . . . Something like a plow overturned the white rain which began to gather near him. Its furrow left a canyon in the rain and sand, and with no unfriendly intent unveiled thoughts of himself which for some time now were forgotten. Years long and windy began to destroy his ideas. He awaited the nurse to remark this sudden decrease of himself within himself, for without question he understood the factual circumstance of the death of his young heart . . .

A very passable mutation, a very courteous issuance into serenity or something like it, into the beam of suspended particular that upheld him as a column of alternate colds, into a suspense of turning equilibrium, into wave motion . . .

The room had gone cotton, perhaps.

You couldn't be sure . . .

THE FACE

Louis Moreau

THE HUBS made a hollow knocking sound as our wagon rolled down the road in monotony. My mother sat beside me on the front seat of our canvas covered wagon. We were in the hills of east Texas and were moving toward south Louisiana. A tub of hot coals set upon four brickbats in the wagon bed made us comfortable.

To our left was a small patch of plowed ground, separated from the road by a rail fence. Not far beyond this stood a strip of naked trees through which the sun could be seen as it sank near the horizon, a huge ball of yellow fire. There was no sound except the squeak of harness and the noise of the wagon rolling slowly along.

Farther ahead there was more plowed ground. A pair of horses' heads could be seen over the rail fence. At that place two men were leaning against the fence and were talking to each other across it.

"I wonder if the man is telling your father we are on the wrong road," said my mother.

"I hope not," I answered.

"Let us talk about something cheerful, Son."

"Are you afraid?"

My mother did not answer but shrugged her shoulders and kept looking ahead at the two men talking at the fence. She seemed enveloped in some feeling all her own. She had spells of despondency I could not quite understand.

I looked at her out of the corner of my eye, for I feared she would begin again. She was not skinny and nervous looking, as most women are who get on your nerves with their petty fears. She was stout and vigorous looking and her eyes were calm, sometimes dreamy. Although we once lived in the Bayou Jack country, where there were ferocious beasts, and she was not afraid to live there, yet I have seen her upset over trifles. What makes her that way? I would think.

"Won't you be glad when we get back home and you can go hunting in the swamp with your father, and we can eat peaches and figs out of our trees in the yard? You don't remember our home very well, do you, Son?"

"Not very."

"Well, our home is—well, it is just home," she said, trying to be gay. "Don't you remember the time that we thought you were lost and your grandfather found you asleep in the cornfield?"

"How old was I?"

"Three. You little crocodile, we've been gone eleven years." Then with dreamy eyes she was silent. "Wouldn't you like to see your grandfather again?"

"Yes," I answered.

"I know he will be glad to see us."

The monotonous thudding of the wheels reigned again for a moment; then my mother said in a lonely voice, "Isn't it funny about home, how everything wants to go back to it. Is it magic?"

I sat there not paying much attention to her, listening to the wagon hubs as the wagon lumbered on, feeling as though a burden was upon me as long as she talked.

My father, whom we were nearing, stood up straight, faced us, and twirled his mustache. I thought I could see the gleam in his gray-blue eyes.

When we drew near he called out to me to stop and said: "We are among friends from our home parish." Then, addressing the man who stood on the other side of the fence, he said, "This is my big family, my wife and my son."

The man's name was George Monin.

He and my parents talked for a while; then he started unhitching his horses. My father said to me, "You may start your snails over the hill. We will be waiting for you beyond it."

On the far side of the hill was a narrow lane which followed a winding creek leading west of the road. My father and his friend had passed us and were waiting there. We all followed the lane and shortly came to a three-room, unpainted house, almost hidden behind a bend in the line of trees. This house was even more lonely than the road.

The man's wife was thin, and careworn. She held out her hand to my mother, then embraced her and wept, as all women who have lived in the lonely hills of Texas weep when meeting a stranger.

"They are from Avoyelles and speak French!" her husband said. At this she redoubled her tears for joy. After a while the two women were talking and laughing.

"Let me unhitch your team," said our friend to my father. He busied himself at this courtesy and would not let me or my father help him. He was so glad to see us that it seemed he could not do enough for us.

Then as he worked I observed his face. It was flushed red from excitement. But I perceived something peculiar about it, since I was free to examine it without his noticing me.

In my childhood fancy I thought the face looked the way it did for a purpose. Although he could not have been more than forty-two, he was wrinkled, but his wrinkles were not those of sun, dust, or wind. I saw on closer observation that the reddish tint was a natural one only darkened by the stimulation of blood to his face. The cheek-bones were high and flat. The eyes were bulging and restless; the mouth was nervous. It was such a face as I have seen in nightmares in which the monster was gentle and of good intent.

Soon after dark we were eating the simple but wholesome meal of a country home: chicken gumbo, rice, long slices of homemade bread with sweet milk, which Mrs. Monin served to us out of a large bowl.

Somewhat restless, perhaps, because of the peaceful atmosphere, and the uninteresting conversation about crops and the weather, I sought escape by examining the interior of the dining room. Over the fireplace, in which was a low fire, hung an old-fashioned picture. On the mantle I

saw an old-fashioned clock that was not running. Then I found myself counting the doors, three of them, one opening into the kitchen, another giving access to the side porch, and a third, which led into the sitting room. Over each of these hung a large rifle.

We got up after supper and went into the living room, where a warm fire burned in the hearth. My mother walked in just ahead of my father. "Have you asked Mr. Monin about the road?" she said.

"Why, yes—I had forgotten to tell you—we are off the main road, but can regain it by cutting across a wood about a day's drive from here."

My mother sighed contentedly and soon was engaged in talking to Mrs. Monin.

I sat near the men.

"How long have you been away from Louisiana?" my father asked George Monin.

"Eleven years."

"So have I."

"Avoyelles is all right, I guess," said George Monin looking fixedly into the fire.

My father said. "It's got its good and its bad."

They went on talking about a wealthy doctor there who owned nearly all the land, who made nearly all the money, owned a large cotton gin, and swindled all the farmers.

"He was worse than Nick Reshaum," said my father.

"A lot worse."

"Nick got sent to the pen about the time we left there, didn't he?"

"Right after that," said George Monin. And my father said, "I heard he had escaped."

"He did, after a couple of months."

"Did you ever know him?"

"No, but I knew a brother of his, a blacksmith."

"So did I. Melville?"

"Yes, Melville, the blacksmith," answered George Monin.

"Melville used to trade at my store," said my father. "Pretty straight guy."

"Melville was as square-shooting a man as I want to meet. He wasn't anything at all like Nick. Didn't even look like him."

"He used to help Nick break out of jail," my father added.

"One time he forged a key just like the jail key and gave it to Nick when Nick was in jail. That way, Nick could get out at night and come back before daybreak. If Melville had made him stay in he might've made a man out of him. Melville was too good."

"But that Nick!" said my father.

"Yeh, that Nick!" And the two men laughed.

"Did you ever hear about the night he got married?"

"He eloped on a stolen horse with a brand new saddle and blanket on it."

My father laughed. "Some devil of a man for that peace-loving country. I heard he'd had a scuffle with Sheriff Tom Butler when he had escaped jail and Tom caught him and took him back. When they got to the cell he threw Tom down, picked him up and threw him in the cell; then he locked him in and took the key off with him. They had to break the door to get Tom Butler out. Some people say he killed a guard in escaping the penitentiary."

George Monin's face looked strange in the fire and lamplight. It was strange to see his bulging eyes sparkling with humor. "Some devil!" he said, and he and my father laughed and the sound of their voices seemed to grow dimmer and dimmer. The room was growing stuffy. I could barely keep my eyes open. Soon I was asleep.

The next morning my mother awoke me at sunrise. "Get up and eat," she said; "we will soon be leaving."

My father and George Monin were in the lot hitching the wagon. In nearly an hour we were climbing in, ready to leave. It was as though with our departure there would come a calamity to the Monins. As my mother started to step up into the wagon, the lonely, careworn little woman threw her arms about her neck and began to sob like a child. Her husband, a look of wistful sadness on his red face, stood by not knowing what to do or say. My father came up to him and offered his hand. George Monin took it and with a heavy voice said, "Please . . . do stay longer . . . couldn't you stay one more day?"

My father shook his head with a kindly smile. "I wish we could stay longer, Mr. Monin, but we've been on the road for three weeks, already."

George Monin slapped my father on the shoulder. He had a pitiful expression on his face. "Wait a minute," he said, and went off toward the smoke house. He returned with a bundle of fresh sausage which he had wrapped for us in some thick paper. "You might need this when you get home," he laughed, then added, "to remember me by."

He opened the gate and we passed onto the road. As we went by him I caught a lasting impression of his face. Somehow I felt that that face would follow me through life—looking for something I had.

Once more the hubs knocked with the wheels rolling towards home. Late that afternoon we camped at a spot which had been designated as being four miles from the edge of the wood.

The next morning my father said to my mother, "Where are those buckshot shells?" My mother began searching under some things.

"What do you want them for?" I asked him.

"Safety."

"Is it—p-panthers?"

"Hush, Son," my mother interposed; "you were born in a panther country."

We lost the way three times because the tracks left by the rare traffic were so dim. At these times we were rather uneasy, for men have been known to get lost and die of distraction and starvation in places much smaller than this. At almost sundown we came to an open place which showed no connection with the forest. "We are out of the wilderness," my father said, then pointing ahead, "There is the road. In three days we will be in Louisiana."

We drove the wagon off the road and stopped on the bank of a creek, to camp for the night. With nothing about us but naked trees, a creek, the setting sun, the vacant, chilly atmosphere, and perhaps because we so suddenly found ourselves without any visible obstacles, I did not know how to feel. As I helped my father unhitch and put the blankets on the horses I looked over and saw my mother sitting in the back of the wagon, looking down into the tub of hot coals.

I went over and said to her, "Do you feel bad, Mamma?"

"No," she answered.

"Are you thinking about home?"

"No."

"Then, Mamma, why do you sit like that, without anything to say? . . . Are you sad?"

"Go and get me some hickory branches for the tub, Son," she said calmly.

Dusk began to fall and to envelop our solitary little camp with gloom. I went and got the wood and brought it to her. Then I put some oats for the horses in a trough fastened behind the wagon. I called them and they came and ground up the oats between their teeth with monotonous crunching.

I thought I heard a sound on the road. I looked there and saw a buggy stopping, with a man in it peering at us through the trees. After a while he turned his horse and drove off the road in our direction.

It was George Monin.

"Hello, there!" exclaimed my father going to him. The man got out of the buggy. He had not said a word.

"What brings you here?" asked my father.

"My friend," replied George Monin with an uneasy sigh, "you see me in trouble."

"Yes?"

Just then my mother who had been inside the wagon came out. "Why, hello, Mr. ——"

"Doesn't it occur to you who I am?" the man was saying.

My father thought a while, then looked into his face. His lips flickered with a smile of familiarity. For a moment it seemed as though a grin strayed over George Monin's face.

"You are Nick Reshaum," said my father.

"I am."

The words mingled with the crunching of oats in the horse trough. After some hesitation the man who had spoken them looked up at the bare trees, then down at his toes. "You know—of course—there's a price on my head—a thousand dollars, I think," he said haltingly.

My father laughed. "Ha! Nick, I wouldn't turn you in for my wagon full of money."

With tears streaming down his cheeks and his face suffused with mingled joy and sadness, Nick Reshaum bowed his head, repeating, "My friends—my friends . . ."

He was in a hurry to go back home to his wife, but my parents prevailed upon him to stay with us. That night in the dim lamplight under the wagon canvas he told us his story. I don't remember all of it. Perhaps it was fatigue, perhaps it was the oily smell of the lamp, or the look in his face that made me forget most of the story and go to sleep before it was finished. I can only remember that he spoke of loneliness in his boyhood, of stealing, of switching cattle brands. I remember he said to my father, "You're a square-shooter. I've known you a long time but you haven't known me. I've heard a lot of good things about you. That's why I trust you . . . I've learned that jails and penitentiaries are not the only prisons a man can be in . . . Some day they'll hang me, I know . . ."

The next morning when I awoke my father was standing by our horses, and was looking toward the road. I thought of our friend and looked about me. I did not see him. My father said something to my mother and she made an exclamation such as a woman makes when she is both shocked and hurt.

"Where is he—what has happened?" I cried out.

"He is gone," said my father calmly. There was a heavy look on his face.

"Did he take anything?" I asked.

"Nothing but his horse and buggy," said my father.

"Oh, Son, how could you!" my mother exclaimed to me; and she hid her face and sobbed, "He has gone like this—into those woods—in the dark . . ."

Oftentimes while my mother was ironing, or when she was bent over the stove, and I had just thrown an armful of wood into the wood box, she has looked at me and said in her tender, wistful, voice, "I wonder if Mr. Reshaum ever got through those woods, or if a panther killed him. Do you think, perhaps, he got lost and died away out there alone with his horse?"

"I don't know, Mamma," I would answer, "but wasn't he a queer man, wasn't his face the most peculiar thing you ever saw?"

"Wasn't it!" my mother would say; "I think I would like to forget him, but somehow I can't. I wonder what makes us remember people though we try to forget them. Can't you tell me that, Son?"

Where anyone else would have been merely surprised or astonished she had been heartbroken and permanently impressed. I felt very near her.

Fifteen years after that my mother died.

As the years are passing I am gradually forgetting Nick Reshaum—the man—but his face will never leave me. As in my childhood I am yet bewildered before it. And while his face is there in my thoughts, I think I feel something present about me, and I am shaken with a violent and tragic desire to be again near that which is tender, and comforting—but impossible to reach. Then I am swept back into the deceitful materiality about me. And, here, let me digress to contend that substance is faithless; in it my senses lead me about as a blind man—and I am deceived; for here is something I can lay my hand upon and feel, and it is proved a fraud; but yonder is a dream, a desire, or yet a faint image only touched by the last sigh of sad memory—and I am drawn to it as though by some overpowering machine of the Universe—

Nick Reshaum, what has become of you!

LIBERALISM AND COMMUNISM RECONSIDERED

Frederick L. Schuman

THAT COMMUNISM is the ripened fruit of liberalism is an article of faith among all fascists. This identification has been insisted upon by Hitler and Mussolini chiefly as a means of discrediting parliamentarianism by linking it with bolshevism. Since bolshevism, to the petty bourgeois mind, spells murder, rapine, and anarchy, the demagogue-dictators of the new medievalism have striven to transfer deep-seated anti-bolshevist revulsions to the ideals and institutions of political and social democracy. In much of central Europe and in Japan the transfer has been successfully achieved. Nazi ideologists have perfected the identification by depicting liberalism and communism as twin agencies of the "Jewish World Conspiracy" to destroy the Nordic race. In the *Weltanschauung* of the Third Reich, the U.S.S.R. is simply an aggregation of eastern "sub-humanity" enslaved by the Israelites and destined to be used by them to destroy "white" civilization. Non-German fascists are content to portray bolshevism as the inevitable result of the cowardice, incompetence, and misplaced humanitarianism of the preachers of the democratic way of life.

On the face of it, this fascist identification of the two great mass ideologies which fascism repudiates and attacks is patent nonsense. In terms of past history and present political alignments, however, there is a germ of truth in the thesis, though that truth is far removed from the mouthings of the propagandists in Berlin, Rome, and Tokyo. The kinship between liberalism and communism is not merely a recent product of a common

fear of fascist aggression, driving France, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, and perhaps other states into a liberal-communist "united front" and causing the Communist International, somewhat belatedly, to defend democratic governments instead of seeking to destroy them. It is a product of the historical genesis of communism in the matrix of liberalism. Marx erected his economics on a foundation of Ricardo and Adam Smith. His politics and his sociology rest upon the ideals of political liberalism. His philosophy was fashioned out of postulates no less dear to middle-class champions of democracy than to proletarian champions of socialism. Not by accident did he find refuge in London and do most of his work in the citadel of modern parliamentarianism, humanitarianism, and "social reform." Both "Utopian" and Marxian socialism have striven to translate the slogan of "Liberty! Equality! Fraternity!" into economic and social reality. From the beginning liberals and communists have both placed their trust in Reason and in the Common Man.

Today the gulf between liberalism and communism is not a consequence of fundamentally irreconcilable values and objectives. All propertied classes, to be sure, have a common interest in combating movements designed to destroy or restrict property rights. British, French, and American industrialists are brothers, under the skin, of the industrialists of Germany, Italy, and Japan—or would be were they not competitors and rivals in the shrinking markets of a maladjusted world. In this sense "Wall Street" and Moscow are indeed at opposite poles. Communism is anathema to private entrepreneurs everywhere. The propertied elites of the Western democracies may even, in a crisis, follow the example of their confreres in repudiating democracy in order to save property. But all this to the contrary notwithstanding, the fact remains that democracy as a mass faith (as distinct from a political device temporarily utilized by the *haute bourgeoisie*) is not at all ideologically incompatible with communism.

The observer who sees only the externals of life or the established patterns of the distribution of wealth and income may choose to believe that Washington, London, and Paris are part of the same world with Rome, Vienna, Tokyo, and Berlin and that this world is utterly at variance with that other world between Leningrad and Vladivostok. But the observer who perceives the content and direction of the collective ideals that move

societies to action will recognize that the great cleavage between contemporary societies is not between "capitalism" (democratic or fascist) and "communism," but between those (whether in Manchester, Moscow, Marseilles, or Minneapolis) who believe in mind and in government of, by, and for the people and those (whether in Munich, Milan, or Mukden) who believe in might and in government of, by, and for a self-appointed oligarchy of property and privilege. Liberals in the tradition of Cromwell, Jefferson, Mirabeau, and Lincoln have reluctantly perpetuated economic and social inequalities and injustices through democratic forms of political power and have hoped that political democracy might lead to economic and social democracy. Communists have reluctantly adopted nondemocratic forms of political power in order to remove economic and social inequalities and injustices and have hoped that social democracy, once achieved in the "classless society," might lead to a restoration of political democracy. The means have been different, but the ends striven for have not been fundamentally opposed. These ends are wholly irreconcilable with the ends of all fascists, authoritarians, apologists of aristocracy, and preachers of privilege, hierarchy, and despotism. Both liberals and communists, if they comprehend the historical development and the human implications of their faiths, are alike dedicated to freedom, to tolerance, to the pragmatic discovery of truth through experimentation and free discussion in the market place, to the progressive amelioration of the lot of the man-in-the-street, to the ever wider diffusion of the fruits of industrial civilization among the masses of mankind, and, above all, to the application of reason to human affairs.

In the years ahead an adequate appreciation of these values common to both liberalism and communism may well become a prerequisite for the survival of democratic ideals. Such an appreciation is already sufficiently widespread not only to promote diplomatic collaboration between liberal and communist states, but to make possible and necessary a revaluation of the new society of the Soviet Union by Western liberals. It is therefore timely and appropriate that the most comprehensive and sympathetic description of the new Soviet society thus far written should be the work of two liberals who have devoted their long lives to the implementation of democratic ideals. And it is of the utmost significance that this monumental work should contend with great plausibility and persua-

siveness that bolshevism, at the end of its second decade, is building a great community not less democratic in its values and in its organization than those of western Europe and America and not less devoted to those values which liberal Western culture has long cherished.*

Beatrice and Sidney Webb (now Lady and Lord Passfield) are not concerned in *Soviet Communism* with "proving" the thesis suggested above. Their encyclopaedic work is descriptive and analytical rather than argumentative. The conclusions to which their pages lead are all the more valid and important. They have necessarily looked upon the Soviet scene through the eyes of liberals and of Fabian socialists. But they are too old, too wise, too shrewd to be blinded by their predilections. They have looked upon the U.S.S.R. also through the eyes of social scientists, of distinguished and superlatively competent investigators of social, political, and economic conditions in many times and places. They have missed none of the things which have been shocking to liberals and abhorrent to revisionist socialists opposed to revolution and committed to the "inevitability of gradualism." But neither have they missed the dynamic, pulsating life of the Soviet masses and the gigantic enterprise of constructing a new heaven and a new earth. "In all social history—that 'endless adventure of governing man'—there has been no such colossal and so exciting an experiment," they write in their "Preface." They ascribe their "presumption" in undertaking this task at the close of their lives to "the recklessness of old age." Readers will ascribe it to the energy and optimism of an indomitable youthfulness.

Quite apart from specific interpretations and conclusions, these two volumes will at once become the standard work on the Soviet Union. Here at last are the facts—in amazing and documented abundance. These thousand pages are models of painstaking scholarship. The authors have supplemented observations and interviews with an exhaustive study of almost all Russian, English, German, and French sources on every aspect of Soviet life. The footnotes alone are invaluable. But there is no pedantry here and no studied display of the paraphernalia of erudition to conceal paucity of thought. Each topic is handled in such a way as to present all relevant data, to suggest its interrelationships with other problems, and to provoke

* *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization?*, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Two volumes, $7.50.

fruitful thinking about implications and analogies. These chapters are exciting not merely by virtue of their subject matter but by virtue of their urbane and felicitous style and their capacity to recapture long perspectives and to conjure up visions stretching into the far future. The history of the revolution is here in outline. The institutions and problems of contemporary Soviet life are here in rich detail. The authors proposed to view the Soviet scene "as a whole"—on the ground that without a whole view no valid judgments on particular phases are possible. They have succeeded admirably. Nothing of significance has been omitted. Little has been neglected. Factual data and citations are almost uncannily accurate and precise. No other work remotely approaches the Webb volumes. It is unlikely that their *magnum opus* will be superseded for many years, despite the fact that the society which it describes is changing more rapidly than any other on the globe.

The two volumes deal respectively with "The Constitution" and "Social Trends in Soviet Communism." In the first the formal structure of the state is reviewed at the outset under the heading of "Man as a Citizen." The whole Soviet system in all its apparent complexity, from the seventy thousand local Soviets to the All-Union Council of People's Commissars, is analyzed and described. The new constitution which goes into effect this fall introduces secret, direct elections; safeguards personal rights more adequately; eliminates all class disabilities; and increases the number of constituent republics from seven to eleven. These developments are natural outgrowths of the political tendencies here described. "Man as a Producer" is next dealt with in terms of the Soviet trade unions with their eighteen million members, the artels, the collective farms, and miscellaneous organizations of workers. Chapter IV, "Man the Consumer," treats of the coöperatives with their forty-five thousand locals, their seventy-three million members, and their decisive rôle in retail distribution. Finally, in Chapter V, the authors deal with the Communist Party as a "Vocation of Leadership," supplying energy, initiative, and driving force to the whole system.

The most interesting fact adduced with regard to this multiplicity of Soviet organizations is that, far from being subjected to coercion from above, they furnish an opportunity for the active participation of all

citizens, producers, and consumers in community decisions. These organizations have not been *gleichgeschaltet* as a means of imposing a totalitarian tyranny upon the national life. They have sprung from the soil and evolved as a means of meeting community needs and diffusing a sense of responsibility throughout the entire population. When the authors pose the question "Democracy or Dictatorship?" in Chapter VI, they are obliged to answer, in part:

> . . . There is no more fertile source of error in sociology, as in any other science, than posing a question in the terms of ancient categories, or even of yesterday's definitions . . . Have we perhaps here a case—to use a barbarous term—of a "creedocracy" of a novel kind, inspiring a multiform democracy in which soviets and trade unions, coöperative societies and voluntary associations, provide for the personal participation in public affairs of an unprecedented proportion of the entire adult population? The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics does not consist of a government and a people confronting each other, as all other great societies have hitherto been. It is a highly integrated social organism in which, over a vast area, each individual man, woman or youth is expected to participate in three separate capacities: as a citizen, as a producer, and as a consumer; to which should be added membership of one or more voluntary organizations intent on bettering the life of the community. Meanwhile, leadership is carried on by a new profession, organized, like other professions, as a voluntarily enlisted and self-governing unit; the only part of the constitution of Soviet Communism, by the way, that has no foundation in any statute. In short, the U.S.S.R. is a government instrumented by all adult inhabitants, organized in a varied array of collectives, having their several functions, and among them carrying on, with a strangely new "political economy," nearly the whole wealth production of the country. (pp.449-450)

Volume I, however, does not evade the question of the democratic or nondemocratic character of the regime. Though writing before the new constitution, which takes a long stride toward parliamentarianism, the Webbs unequivocally describe the Soviet system as a democracy. They show

clearly that decisions of public policy are not dictated from the top down, but emerge out of prolonged discussion on the part of myriads of interested groups. This procedure is, in both theory and practice, the complete reverse of that prevailing in the fascist dictatorships. To speak of the Soviets as "dictating" to the population, or of the Communist Party as "dictating" to the Soviets, or of Stalin as "dictating" to the Communist Party is to misconstrue the type of relations prevailing among them. Contrary to the Nazi *Fuehrerprinzip* and in conformity with the principles of parliamentary democracy, political responsibility in the Soviet state flows from superiors to inferiors and political authority flows from inferiors to superiors. That this is not a mere play on words is made evident by the wealth of material illustrative of the practice of policy-formulation which the Webbs supply. Moreover, the communists act not for themselves, but for the whole body of organized workers and collective peasants. *Ergo:* The "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" is not a dictatorship!

This conclusion will be accepted by those who define democracy in terms of popular participation in the formulation of community programs. Under communism there is almost universal participation, not in the form of meaningless referenda where citizens may vote "yes," but in the form of genuinely representative elections and actual group discussions in bodies with legislative and administrative functions. The Webbs' conclusion might be clarified, however, by a more precise definition than they attempt. Democratic governments, as distinguished from autocracies or dictatorships, are those (1) in which power-holders are selected by the mass of adults in the community and are subject to replacement by orderly procedures; (2) in which governmental personalities and policies are subject to adverse criticism within wide limits of freedom of expression; and (3) in which political wisdom and public policies grow out of a free interchange of demands and proposals in a free market for discussion. By this test, it is clear that the U.S.S.R. is relatively democratic in the sense that the limits of permissible criticism are quite wide (though not so wide as in the Western democracies) and that political truth is in large measure arrived at through free discussion (though again not so free, as yet, as in the Western democracies). Soviet delegates, furthermore, are elected and may be recalled. But the real power-holders, i.e., the Communists, claim a "mon-

opoly of legality." They ban all other organized parties and are not subject to replacement by electoral devices. The "Vocation of Leadership" is constantly disciplining and purifying its membership and constantly has both ears to the ground, to use an American phrase. But the Party as a group cannot be displaced in the seats of the mighty by any competing party. In this sense (and in this sense only), its rule is a dictatorship, though one which has been progressively liberalized and one which has never precluded mass criticism, mass deliberation, and mass participation. There is no reason to suppose that the task of social and economic transformation which has been undertaken in the Soviet Union could be accomplished anywhere without such an organization of disciplined leadership.

To return to the Webbs, their second volume reviews the major functions and problems of the Soviet system in its mission in creating a new society. They consider first "The Liquidation of the Landlord and the Capitalist"—with due attention to the GPU, the terrorization of the intelligentsia, the ruthless crushing of the kulaks, and the persecution of certain engineers and technicians. Lest these instances of violent coercion should seem to invalidate the conclusion reached at the close of the first volume, the authors point out that the Russian Revolution was comparable to the Protestant Reformation, the Industrial Revolution, and the democratic revolution rolled into one, plus two successive agrarian revolutions and a gigantic mechanization of the whole economy. So great a transformation, they believe, could scarcely have been achieved without much bloodshed and violent coercion. Chapter VIII, on "Planned Production for Community Consumption," treats of the history and technique of economic planning. One might wish for more attention here to the specifically economic, financial, and administrative aspects of a planned economy, but the Webbs do not pause to answer all the questions which an economist might put. They point out that most orthodox economists content themselves with demonstrating, *a priori,* that a "planned economy" is unworkable. In view of the stubborn fact that Soviet economy *does* work, that it has increased production at a phenomenal rate, abolished unemployment, eliminated slumps and booms, and expanded consumer demand more rapidly than productive capacity, what more is to be said? Volumes more might be said, no doubt. But nothing very illuminating is likely to emerge

here so long as Marxist and *laissez-faire* economists treat one another with complete contempt.

The remaining chapters discuss the new socialist incentives to inventiveness and productivity, the "Remaking of Man" through social insurance and education, the implications of Marxism restated in non-Marxist terms ("Science the Salvation of Mankind"), and "The Good Life," i.e., the ideal of plenty for all in a classless society, the emerging communist ethics, the "withering away of the state," and the problems of foreign relations. An "Epilogue" seeks to answer the question: A New Civilization? The affirmative answer which the Webbs give rests upon eight characteristic features of Soviet communism which distinguish it from all other present or past civilizations: the abolition of the profit motive; the planning of production for community consumption; social equality and universal participation in available cultural and material satisfactions; a new system of representation; a new system of political control; the cult of science; "Anti-Godism"; and the "emergence of a communist conscience."

> The characteristics of Soviet Communism, which we have summarized one by one, exhibit, when we take them together, a distinct unity, itself in striking contrast with the disunity of western civilization. The code of conduct based on service to the community in social equality, and on the maximum development of health and capacity in every individual, is in harmony with the exclusion of exploitation and the profit-making motive, and with deliberate planning of production for community consumption; whilst both are in full accord with that universal participation in a multiform administration which characterizes the soviet system. The economic and the political organizations, and with them the ethical code, are alike staked on a whole-hearted reliance on the beneficial effect of making known to every citizen all that is known of the facts of the universe, including human nature itself; that is to say, on science as interpreted dialectically to the exclusion of any miraculous supernaturalism or mystical faith in the persistence of personal life after death. The Worship of God is replaced by the Service of Man . . . This synthetic unity of the various features of Soviet Communism is clearly very

different from the warring "contradictions" that continually disillusion contemporary western civilization. (pp.1138-1139)

In commenting upon so sweeping and magnificent an enterprise of social description and interpretation as the Webbs have undertaken it is to be expected that other observers of the same scene will necessarily evaluate details differently and perhaps arrive at different judgments. It is arguable, for example, that increasingly wide wage differentials in Soviet industry may ultimately endanger the ideal of equality; that the superior efficiency of large-scale production in agriculture has not been conclusively demonstrated; that ancient Russian slovenliness and incompetence in technical matters has by no means been overcome as yet; that the technique of planning is still highly experimental and somewhat mysterious and incalculable. But, by and large, the picture which the Webbs have painted will be recognized by all honest observers and students as an authentic and definitive portrait of Soviet Communism.

If any broad criticism is called for, it must be directed toward a too-exclusive trust in science and organized intelligence as instrumentalities of human amelioration. Liberals in general, and English Fabians in particular, are prone to believe that Reason, properly applied, can solve all human problems. The Webbs' enthusiasm for the Soviet state flows from the assumption that here, for the first time, Reason is given its proper place in society. The assumption is, in part, valid. But communists have been wiser than liberals (though not so clever as fascists) in recognizing—albeit contrary to their own "principles"—that masses of men are moved not by Reason, nor even by economic self-interest, but by emotions, mysticism, and mythology. They have perceived that societies are held together never by cold intellect but always by nonlogical symbols of warmly felt collective experience. The Webbs praise the communist leaders as idealists, planners, and administrators, but have little praise for them as master-propagandists. They are disturbed by communist orthodoxy and intolerance and by such absurdities as "the purity of the Marxist-Leninist theory in surgery" or "the dialectics of the internal combustion motor" or "the dialectical clarity of the Soviet fishing industry." These things seem to the Webbs to be deplorable excrescences. And they are somewhat naïvely

astonished that communists should think it necessary to hate their enemies. Hatred is unscientific. Marxist "social science," they contend, must develop as Darwinian biology has developed—not through citations of the sacred writing of the Master but through continued observation and experimentation. Reason must triumph.

What the Webbs overlook—or at least minimize—is the fact that no great mass movement, no profound revolution, no transvaluation of values is possible without the psychlogical equivalents of religious supernaturalism. There are ever needed for such enterprises symbols of Good, to be revered; symbols of Evil, to be hated; heroes, saints, and martyrs, to be worshiped; dogmatic credos, to be defended; and a promise of salvation and the Millennium, to be believed in nonrationally and passionately. Fascism has achieved such a faith, shot through with self-destructive madness. Communism has achieved such a faith—and only within the framework of the faith is there "freedom" or "democracy" or any opportunity for the application of Reason to social problems. But liberalism, having outgrown its pristine crusading fervor and placed its trust in a dispassionate Reason unleavened by faith, is no longer an effective religion able to move men to sacrifice and heroism. Only the destructive and suicidal passion of nationalism plays this rôle in the weary Western lands. Democratic leaders are not lacking in sufficient intelligence to cope with the problems before them. They are lacking in ability to inspire awe, reverence, and fanatical devotion toward the symbols and values in the name of which they rule. In an epoch of unprecedented insecurity, the human soul cries out for something to believe in. A new orthodoxy arises over the grave of each old one destroyed. The French revolutionaries disestablished the church and turned at once to worship the "Goddess of Reason." Russia strives to make of science a "cult." The Mind serves man only when clothed in the garments of the Spirit. Some faiths, such as orthodox Russian Christianity, militant nationalism, and contemporary fascism, deny and destroy Reason. Others, such as liberalism and communism, give Reason a wide field of action. But Reason, divorced from any faith, is impotent to serve mankind.

Such promise of human betterment as communism may seem to offer flows from the circumstance that it is a faith within whose folds Reason, i.e., theoretical and applied science and the scientific attitudes of impar-

tiality, objectivity, and critical constructive creativeness, appears thus far to have broad opportunities for influencing human behavior. But communism as a fighting faith is suffused with bigotry, intolerance, and hatred. Which of its aspects will ultimately prevail cannot now be predicted with certainty, nor does this depend upon factors within the control of communism itself. At the end, the Webbs are confident that the new civilization which they have depicted will spread to other lands, though how or when they are unprepared to say. Their confidence appears to be based on the consideration that communism is "reasonable." But if communism spreads, it will not be because it is reasonable, but because it stirs men's hearts and viscera more deeply than other faiths. Only amid the material and spiritual wreckage left by a second World War is it likely that new millions will be converted to the Marxist-Leninist gospel. But in such a war, Reason will die along with the liberalism which first gave it a field for effective action in human affairs. And the communism which will sweep westward in the wake of war will in all probability be far more dogmatic, illiberal, unreasonable, and fanatical than the relatively rational faith which the Webbs admire. Desperate men facing death think with their blood and scorn intellect in favor of blind belief. Communism, caught in a whirlpool of universal war, will become a cult of hysteria and hate with Reason left behind. No faith can come to Reason's rescue in the delirium of mass murder and destruction. And if a liberal faith fails to come to Reason's rescue, a faith without Reason and against Reason must prevail.

That the menace of war and fascism threatens to make both liberals and communists illiberal, intolerant, and sadistic is abundantly clear as the year 1936 draws to its close. In blood-soaked Spain the "People's Front" felt obliged to resist guns with guns, terror with terror, massacre with massacre—and to face defeat if liberals and communists displayed less violent and destructive fanaticism than their fascist enemies. In the Soviet Union, fearful of fascist attack, the "vocation of leadership" reverts to brutality at the very time when it is preparing a democratic constitution. And the brutality is no longer that of communists against anticommunists but that of communists against communists. Over a hundred persons were shot in the early weeks of 1935 after Kirov's assassination. Last August six-

teen persons, including such "old Bolsheviks" as Zinoviev and Kamenev, were executed for allegedly conspiring with Trotsky to slay Stalin and other Soviet leaders. If the accusation be true, despite Trotsky's denials, it is evident that critics and dissenters within the new elite feel, rightly or wrongly, that murder is the only means at their disposal for changing the personnel and policies of the communist leadership. If the accusation be false, despite "confessions" of guilt, it is clear that the habit of violence, first developed against the expropriated classes, has persisted as a means of destroying critics and dissenters within the ranks. In either case, Soviet politics has here regressed from reasonable discussion and compromise to bloody violence. Even democracies are violent and bloody in wartime and in the face of the threat of war. But the explanation is not a justification. War and Reason are mutually exclusive—whether the war be between nations, classes, or factions.

Peace is the prerequisite of the survival of the values which liberals and communists still have in common. In the present pattern of world politics, peace depends upon collaboration between liberalism and communism to halt fascist aggression and fascist preparations for Armageddon. Moscow has invited the West to join in common defense against the new barbarians. From a liberal-communist alliance to prevent war may come a further liberalization of communism and a resurgence of liberalism as a living faith, revived and enriched, paradoxically, by Moscow's example. If liberalism has still at its disposal sufficient imagination and statesmanship to accept the invitation, salvation on the brink of doom is still possible. If not, Western mankind will perish in bloody chaos; and Mind, Reason, Intellect, Science—every manifestation of organized sanity and creative logic—will wane and be superseded by hysterically savage mysticisms darker and more degrading than any yet known to the race.

THE LATER POETRY OF W. B. YEATS

R. P. Blackmur

THE LATER poetry of William Butler Yeats is certainly great enough in its kind, and varied enough within its kind, to warrant a special approach, deliberately not the only approach, and deliberately not a complete approach. A body of great poety will awaken and exemplify different interests on different occasions, or even on the same occasions, as we may see in the contrasting and often contesting literatures about Dante and Shakespeare: even a relation to the poetry is not common to them all. I propose here to examine Yeats' later poetry with a special regard to his own approach to the making of it; and to explore a little what I conceive to be the dominant mode of his insight, the relations between it and the printed poems, and—a different thing—the relations between it and the readers of his poems.

The major facts I hope to illustrate are these: that Yeats has, if you accept his mode, a consistent extraordinary grasp of the reality of emotion, character, and aspiration; and that his chief resort and weapon for the grasping of that reality is magic; and that if we would make use of that reality for ourselves we must also make some use of the magic that inspirits it. What is important is that the nexus of reality and magic is not by paradox or sleight of hand, but is logical and represents, for Yeats in his poetry, a full use of intelligence. Magic performs for Yeats the same fructifying function that Christianity does for Eliot, or that ironic fatalism did for Thomas Hardy; it makes a connection between the poem and its subject

matter and provides an adequate mechanics of meaning and value. If it happens that we discard more of Hardy than we do of Yeats and more of Yeats than we do of Eliot, it is not because Christianity provides better machinery for the movement of poetry than fatalism or magic, but simply because Eliot is a more cautious craftsman. Besides, Eliot's poetry has not even comparatively worn long enough to show what parts are permanent and what merely temporary. The point here is that fatalism, Christianity, and magic are none of them disciplines to which many minds can consciously appeal today, as Hardy, Eliot, and Yeats do, for emotional strength and moral authority. The supernatural is simply not part of our mental furniture, and when we meet it in our reading we say: Here is débris to be swept away. But if we sweep it away without first making sure what it is, we are likely to lose the poetry as well as the débris. It is the very purpose of a supernaturally derived discipline, as used in poetry, to set the substance of natural life apart, to give it a form, a meaning, and a value which cannot be evaded. What is excessive and unwarranted in the discipline we indeed ought to dismiss; but that can be determined only when what is integrating and illuminating is known first. The discipline will in the end turn out to have had only a secondary importance for the reader; but its effect will remain active even when he no longer considers it. That is because for the poet the discipline, far from seeming secondary, had an extraordinary structural, seminal, and substantial importance to the degree that without it he could hardly have written at all.

Poetry does not flow from thin air but requires always either a literal faith, an imaginative faith, or, as in Shakespeare, a mind full of many provisional faiths. The life we all live is not alone enough of a subject for the serious artist; it must be life with a leaning, life with a tendency to shape itself only in certain forms, to afford its most lucid revelations only in certain lights. If our final interest, either as poets or as readers, is in the reality declared when the forms have been removed and the lights taken away, yet we can never come to the reality at all without the first advantage of the form and lights. Without them we should *see* nothing but only glimpse something unstable. We glimpse the fleeting but do not see what it is that fleets.

So it was with Yeats; his early poems are fleeting, some of them beautiful and some that sicken, as you read them, to their own extinction. But as he acquired for himself a discipline, however unacceptable to the bulk of his readers, his poetry obtained an access to reality. So it is with most of our serious poets. It is almost the mark of the poet of genuine merit in our time—the poet who writes serious works with an intellectual aspect which are nonetheless poetry—that he performs his work in the light of an insight, a group of ideas, and a faith, with the discipline that flows from them, which taken together form a view of life most readers cannot share, and which, furthermore, most readers feel as repugnant, or sterile, or simply inconsequential.

All this is to say generally—and we shall say it particularly for Yeats later—that our culture is incomplete with regard to poetry; and the poet has to provide for himself in that quarter where authority and value are derived. It may be that no poet ever found a culture complete for his purpose; it was a welcome and arduous part of his business to make it so. Dante, we may say, completed for poetry the Christian culture of his time, which was itself the completion of centuries. But there was at hand for Dante, and as a rule in the great ages of poetry, a fundamental agreement or convention between the poet and his audience about the validity of the view of life of which the poet deepened the reality and spread the scope. There is no such agreement today. We find poets either using the small conventions of the individual life as if they were great conventions, or attempting to resurrect some great convention of the past, or, finally, attempting to discover the great convention that must lie, willy-nilly, hidden in the life about them. This is a labor, whichever form it takes, which leads as often to subterfuge, substitution, confusion, and failure, as to success; and it puts the abnormal burden upon the reader of determining what the beliefs of the poet are and how much to credit them before he can satisfy himself of the reality which those beliefs envisage. The alternative is to put poetry at a discount—which is what has happened.

This the poet cannot do who is aware of the possibilities of his trade: the possibilities of arresting, enacting, and committing to the language through his poems the expressed value of the life otherwise only lived or evaded. The poet so aware knows, in the phrasing of that prose-addict

Henry James, both the sacred rage of writing and the muffled majesty of authorship; and knows, as Eliot knows, that once to have been visited by the muses is ever afterwards to be haunted. These are qualities that once apprehended may not be discounted without complete surrender, when the poet is no more than a haunt haunted. Yeats has never put his poetry at a discount. But he has made it easy for his readers to do so—as Eliot has in his way—because the price he has paid for it, the expense he has himself been to in getting it on paper, have been a price most readers simply do not know how to pay and an expense, in time and labor and willingness to understand, beyond any initial notion of adequate reward.

The price is the price of a fundamental and deliberate surrender to magic as the ultimate mode for the apprehension of reality. The expense is the double expense of, on the one hand, implementing magic with a consistent symbolism, and on the other hand, the greatly multiplied expense of restoring, through the *craft* of poetry, both the reality and its symbols to that plane where alone their experience becomes actual—the plane of the quickened senses and the concrete emotions. That is to say, the poet (and, as always, the reader) has to combine, to fuse inextricably into something like an organic unity the constructed or derived symbolism of his special insight with the symbolism animating the language itself. It is, on the poet's plane, the labor of bringing the representative forms of knowledge home to the experience which stirred them: the labor of keeping in mind *what* our knowledge is of: the labor of craft. With the poetry of Yeats this labor is, as I say, doubly hard, because the forms of knowledge, being magical, do not fit naturally with the forms of knowledge that ordinarily preoccupy us. But it is possible, and I hope to show it, that the difficulty is, in a sense, superficial and may be overcome with familiarity, and that the mode of magic itself, once familiar, will even seem rational for the purposes of poetry—although it will not thereby seem inevitable. Judged by its works in the representation of emotional reality—and that is all that can be asked in our context—magic and its burden of symbols may be a major tool of the imagination. A tool has often a double function; it performs feats for which it was designed, and it is heuristic, it discovers and performs new feats which could not have been anticipated without it, which it indeed seems to instigate for itself and in the most unlikely quarters. It is with

magic as a tool in its heuristic aspect—as an agent for discovery—that I wish here directly to be concerned.

One of the finest, because one of the most appropriate to our time and place, of all Yeats' poems, is his "The Second Coming."

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

There is about it, to any slowed reading, the immediate conviction of pertinent emotion; the lines are stirring, separately and in their smaller groups, and there is a sensible life in them that makes them seem to combine in the form of an emotion. We may say at once then, for what it is worth, that in writing his poem Yeats was able to choose words which to an appreciable extent were the right ones to reveal or represent the emotion

which was its purpose. The words deliver the meaning which was put into them by the craft with which they were arranged, and that meaning is their own, not to be segregated or given another arrangement without diminution. Ultimately, something of this sort is all that can be said of this or any poem, and when it is said, the poem is known to be good in its own terms or bad because not in its own terms. But the reader seldom reaches an ultimate position about a poem; most poems fail, through craft or conception, to reach an ultimate or absolute position: parts of the craft remain machinery and parts of the conception remain in limbo. Or, as in this poem, close inspection will show something questionable about it. It is true that it can be read as it is, isolated from the rest of Yeats' work and isolated from the intellectual material which it expresses, and a good deal gotten out of it, too, merely by submitting to it. That is because the words are mainly common, both in their emotional and intellectual senses; and if we do not know precisely what the familiar words drag after them into the poem, still we know vaguely what the weight of it feels like; and that seems enough to make a poem at one level of response. Yet if an attempt is made at a more complete response, if we wish to discover the precise emotion which the words mount up to, we come into trouble and uncertainty at once. There is an air of explicitness to each of the separate fragments of the poem. Is it, in this line or that, serious? Has it a reference?—or is it a rhetorical effect, a result only of the persuasive overtones of words?—or is it a combination, a mixture of reference and rhetoric?

Possibly the troubled attention will fasten first upon the italicized phrase in the twelfth line: *Spiritus Mundi;* and the question is whether the general, the readily available senses of the words are adequate to supply the specific sense wanted by the poem. Put another way, can the poet's own arbitrary meaning be made, merely by discovering it, to participate in and enrich what the "normal" meanings of the words in their limiting context provide? The critic can only supply the facts; the poem will in the end provide its own answer. Here there are certain facts that may be extracted from Yeats' prose writings which suggest something of what the words symbolize for him. In one of the notes to the limited edition of *Michael Robartes and the Dancer,* Yeats observes that his mind, like

another's, has been from time to time obsessed by images which had no discoverable origin in his waking experience. Speculating as to their origin, he came to deny both the conscious and the unconscious memory as their probable seat, and finally invented a doctrine which traced the images to sources of supernatural character. I quote only that sentence which is relevant to the phrase in question "Those [images] that come in sleep are (1) from the state immediately preceding our birth; (2) from the *Spiritus Mundi*—that is to say, from a general storehouse of images which have ceased to be a property of any personality or spirit." It apparently follows, for Yeats, that images so derived have both an absolute meaning of their own and an operative force in determining meaning and predicting events in this world. In another place (the Introduction to "The Resurrection" in *Wheels and Butterflies*) he describes the image used in this poem, which he had seen many times, "always at my left side just out of the range of sight, a brazen winged beast that I associated with laughing, ecstatic destruction." Ecstasy, it should be added, comes for Yeats just before death, and at death comes the moment of revelation, when the soul is shown its kindred dead and it is possible to see the future.

Here we come directly upon that central part of Yeats' magical beliefs which it is one purpose of this poem emotionally to represent: the belief in what is called variously *Magnus Annus,* The Great Year, The Platonic Year, and sometimes in a slightly different symbolism, The Great Wheel. This belief, with respect to the history of epochs, is associated with the precession of the equinoxes, which bring, roughly every two thousand years, a Great Year of death and rebirth, and this belief, with respect to individuals, seems to be associated with the phases of the moon; although individuals may be influenced by the equinoxes and there may be a lunar interpretation of history. These beliefs have a scaffold of geometrical figures, gyres, cones, circles, etc., by the application of which exact interpretation is secured. Thus it is possible to predict, both in biography and history, and in time, both forwards and backwards the character, climax, collapse, and rebirth in antithetical form of human types and cultures. There is a subordinate but helpful belief that signs, warnings, even direct messages, are always given, from *Spiritus Mundi* or elsewhere, which the poet and the philosopher have only to see and hear. As it happens, the

Christian era, being nearly two thousand years old, is due for extinction and replacement, in short for the Second Coming, which this poem heralds. In his note to its first publication (in *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*) Yeats expresses his belief as follows:

> At the present moment the life gyre is sweeping outward, unlike that before the birth of Christ which was narrowing, and has almost reached its greatest expansion. The revelation which approaches will however take its character from the contrary movement of the interior gyre. All our scientific, democratic, fact-accumulating, heterogeneous civilisation belongs to the outward gyre and prepares not the continuance of itself but the revelation as in a lightning flash, though in a flash that will not strike only in one place, and will for a time be constantly repeated, of the civilisation that must slowly take its place.

So much for a major gloss upon the poem. Yeats combined, in the best verse he could manage, the beliefs which obsessed him with the image which he took to be a specific illustration of the beliefs. Minor and buttressing glosses are possible for many of the single words and phrases in the poem, some flowing from private doctrine and some from Yeats' direct sense of the world about him, and some from both at once. For example: The "ceremony of innocence" represents for Yeats one of the qualities that made life valuable under the dying aristocratic social tradition; and the meaning of the phrase in the poem requires no magic for completion but only a reading of other poems. The "falcon and the falconer" in the second line has, besides its obvious symbolism, a doctrinal reference. A falcon is a hawk, and a hawk is symbolic of the active or intellectual mind; the falconer is perhaps the soul itself or its uniting principle. There is also the apposition which Yeats has made several times that "Wisdom is a butterfly/ And not a gloomy bird of prey." Whether the special symbolism has actually been incorporated in the poem, and in which form, or whether it is private débris merely, will take a generation of readers to decide. In the meantime it must be taken provisionally for whatever its ambiguity may seem to be worth. Literature is full of falcons, some that fly and some that lack immediacy and sit, archaic, on the poet's wrist; and it is not always

illuminating to determine which is which. But when we come on such lines as

> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity,

we stop short, first to realize the aptness of the statement to every plane of life in the world about us, and then to connect them with the remote body of the poem they illuminate. There is a dilemma of which the branches grow from one trunk but which cannot be solved; for these lines have, not two meanings, but two sources for the same meaning. There is the meaning that comes from the summary observation that this is how men are—and especially men of power—in the world we live in; it is knowledge that comes from knowledge of the "fury and the mire in human veins"; a meaning the contemplation of which has lately (April, 1934) led Yeats to offer himself to any government or party that, using force and marching men, will "promise not this or that measure but a discipline, a way of life." And there is in effect the same meaning, at least at the time the poem was written, which comes from a different source and should have, one would think, very different consequences in prospective party loyalties. Here the meaning has its source in the doctrines of the Great Year and the Phases of the Moon; whereby, to cut exegesis short, it is predicted as necessary that, at the time we have reached, the best minds, being subjective, should have lost all faith though desiring it, and the worst minds, being so nearly objective, have no need of faith and may be full of "passionate intensity" without the control of any faith or wisdom. Thus we have on the one side the mirror of observation and on the other side an imperative, magically derived, which come to the conclusion of form in identical words.

The question is, to repeat, whether the fact of this double control and source of meaning at a critical point defeats or strengthens the unity of the poem; and it is a question which forms itself again and again in the later poems, sometimes obviously but more often only by suggestion. If we take another poem on the same theme, written some years earlier, and before his wife's mediumship gave him the detail of his philosophy, we will find the question no easier to answer in its suggested than in its conspicuous form. There is an element in the poem called "The Magi" which we can

feel the weight of but cannot altogether name, and of which we can only guess at the efficacy.

> Now as at all times I can see in the mind's eye,
> In their stiff, painted clothes, the pale unsatisfied ones
> Appear and disappear in the blue depths of the sky
> With all their ancient faces like rain-beaten stones,
> And all their helms of silver hovering side by side,
> And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find once more,
> Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied,
> The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor.

I mean the element which, were Yeats a Christian, we could accept as a species of Christian blasphemy or advanced heresy, but which since he is not a Christian we find it hard to accept at all: the element of emotional conviction springing from intellectual matters without rational source or structure. We ought to be able, for the poem's sake, to accept the conviction as an emotional possibility, much as we accept *Lear* or Dostoieffsky's *Idiot* as valid, because projected from represented experience. But Yeats' experience is not represented consistently on any one plane. He constantly indicates a supernatural validity for his images of which the authority cannot be reached. If we come nearer to accepting "The Magi" than "The Second Coming" it is partly because the familiar Christian paradigm is more clearly used, and, in the last two lines what Yeats constructs upon it is given a more immediate emotional form, and partly because, *per contra,* there is less demand made upon arbitrary intellectual belief. There is, too, the matter of scope; if we reduce the scope of "The Second Coming" to that of "The Magi" we shall find it much easier to accept; but we shall have lost much of the poem.

We ought now to have enough material to name the two radical defects of magic as a tool for poetry. One defect, which we have just been illustrating, is that it has no available edifice of reason reared upon it conventionally independent of its inspiration. There is little that the uninspired reader can naturally refer to for authority outside the poem, and if he does make a natural reference he is likely to turn out to be at least partly wrong. The

poet is thus in the opposite predicament; he is under the constant necessity of erecting his beliefs into doctrines at the same time that he represents their emotional or dramatic equivalents. He is, in fact, in much the same position that Dante would have been had he had to construct his Christian doctrine while he was composing *The Divine Comedy:* an impossible labor. The Christian supernaturalism, the Christian magic (no less magical than that of Yeats), had the great advantage for Dante, and imaginatively for ourselves, of centuries of reason and criticism and elaboration: It was within reason a consistent whole; and its supernatural element had grown so consistent with experience as to seem supremely *natural*—as indeed it may again. Christianity has an objective form, whatever the mysteries at its heart and its termini, in which all the phenomena of human life may find place and meaning. Magic is none of these things for any large fraction of contemporary society. Magic has a tradition, but it is secret, not public. It has not only central and terminal mysteries but has also peripheral mysteries, which require not only the priest to celebrate but also the adept to manipulate. Magic has never been made "natural." The practical knowledge and power which its beliefs lead to can neither be generally shared nor overtly rationalized. It is in fact held to be dangerous to reveal openly the details of magical experience: they may be revealed, if at all, only in arbitrary symbols and equivocal statements. Thus we find Yeats, in his early and innocuous essay on magic, believing his life to have been imperiled for revealing too much. Again, the spirits or voices through whom magical knowledge is gained are often themselves equivocal and are sometimes deliberately confusing. Yeats was told to remember, "We will deceive you if we can," and on another occasion was forbidden to record anything that was said, only to be scolded later because he had failed to record every word. In short, it is of the essence of magical faith that the supernatural cannot be brought into the natural world except through symbol. The distinction between natural and supernatural is held to be substantial instead of verbal. Hence magic may neither be criticized nor institutionalized; nor can it ever reach a full expression of its own intention. This is perhaps the justification of Stephen Spender's remark that there is more magic in Eliot's "The Hollow Men" than in any poem of Yeats; because of Eliot's Christianity, his magic has a rational base as well as

a supernatural source: it is the magic of an orthodox, authoritative faith. The dogmas of magic, we may say, are all heresies which cannot be expounded except each on its own authority as a fragmentary insight; and its unity can be only the momentary unity of association. Put another way, magic is in one respect in the state of Byzantine Christianity, when miracles were quotidian and the universal frame of experience, when life itself was held to be supernatural and reason was mainly a kind of willful sophistication.

Neither Yeats nor ourselves dwell in Byzantium. At a certain level, though not at all levels, we conceive life, and even its nonrational features, in rational terms. Certainly there is a rational bias and a rational structure in the poetry we mainly agree to hold great—though the content may be what it will; and it is the irrational bias and the confused structure that we are mainly concerned to disavow, to apologize or allow for. It was just to provide himself with the equivalent of a rational religious insight and a predictable rational structure for the rational imagination that in his book, *A Vision* (published, in 1925, in a limited edition only, and then withdrawn), he attempted to convert his magical experience into a systematic philosophy. "I wished," he writes in the Dedication to that work, "for a system of thought that would leave my imagination free to create as it chose and yet make all that it created, or could create, part of the one history, and that the soul's." That is, Yeats hoped by systematizing it to escape from the burden of confusion and abstraction which his magical experience had imposed upon him. "I can now," he declares in this same Dedication, "if I have the energy, find the simplicity I have sought in vain. I need no longer write poems like 'The Phases of the Moon' nor 'Ego Dominus Tuus,' nor spend barren years, as I have done three or four times, striving with abstractions that substitute themselves for the play that I had planned."

"Having inherited," as he says in one of his poems, "a vigorous mind," he could not help seeing, once he had got it all down, that his system was something to disgorge if he could. Its truth as experience would be all the stronger if its abstractions could be expunged. But it could not be disgorged; its thirty-five years of growth was an intimate part of his own growth, and its abstractions were all of a piece with his most objective

experience. And perhaps we, as readers, can see that better from outside than Yeats could from within. I suspect that no amount of will could have rid him of his magical conception of the soul; it was by magic that he knew the soul; and the conception had been too closely associated with his profound sense of his race and personal ancestry. He has never been able to retract his system, only to take up different attitudes towards it. He has alternated between granting his speculations only the validity of poetic myth and planning to announce a new deity. In his vacillation—there is a poem by that title—the rational defect remains, and the reader must deal with it sometimes as an intrusion upon the poetry of indeterminate value and sometimes as itself the subject of dramatic reverie or lyric statement. At least once he tried to force the issue home, and in a section of *A Packet for Ezra Pound* called "Introduction to the Great Wheel" he meets the issue by transforming it, for the moment, into wholly poetic terms. Because it reveals a fundamental honesty and clarity of purpose in the midst of confusion and uncertainty the section is quoted entire.

> Some will ask if I believe all that this book contains, and I will not know how to answer. Does the word belief, as they will use it, belong to our age, can I think of the world as there and I here judging it? I will never think any thoughts but these, or some modification or extension of these; when I write prose or verse they must be somewhere present though it may not be in the words; they must affect my judgment of friends and events; but then there are many symbolisms and none exactly resembles mine. What Leopardi in Ezra Pound's translation calls that 'concord' wherein 'the arcane spirit of the whole mankind turns hardy pilot'—how much better it would be without that word 'hardy' which slackens speed and adds nothing—persuades me that he has best imagined reality who has best imagined justice.

The rational defect, then, remains; the thought is not always in the words; and we must do with it as we can. There is another defect of Yeats' magical system which is especially apparent to the reader but which may not be apparent at all to Yeats. Magic promises precisely matters which it can-

not perform—at least in poetry. It promises, as in "The Second Coming," exact prediction of events in the natural world; and it promises again and again, in different poems, exact revelations of the supernatural, and of this we have an example in what has to many seemed a great poem, "All Souls' Night," which had its first publication as an epilogue to *A Vision*. Near the beginning of the poem we have the explicit declaration: "I have a marvelous thing to say"; and near the end another: "I have mummy truths to tell." "Mummy truths" is an admirable phrase, suggestive as it is of the truths in which the dead are wrapped, ancient truths as old as Egypt perhaps, whence mummies commonly come, and truths, too, that may be unwound. But there, with the suggestion, the truths stop short; there is, for the reader, no unwinding, no revelation of the dead. What Yeats actually does is to summon into the poem various of his dead friends as "characters"—and this is the greatness, and only this, of the poem: the summary, excited, even exalted presentation of character. Perhaps the rhetoric is the marvel and the evasion the truth. We get an impact as from behind, from the speed and weight of the words, and are left with an ominous or terrified frame of mind, the revelation still to come. The revelation, the magic, was in Yeats' mind; hence the exaltation in his language; but it was not and could not be given in the words of the poem.

It may be that for Yeats there was a similar exaltation and a similar self-deceit in certain other poems, but as the promise of revelation was not made, the reader feels no failure of fulfillment. Such poems as "Easter, 1916," "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," and "Upon a Dying Lady" may have buried in them a conviction of invocation and revelation; but if so it is no concern of ours: we are concerned only, as the case may be, with the dramatic presentations of the Irish patriots and poets, Yeats' personal friends, and Aubrey Beardsley's dying sister, and with, in addition, for minor pleasure, the technical means—the spare and delicate language, the lucid images, and quickening rhymes—whereby the characters are presented as intensely felt. There is no problem in such poems but the problem of reaching, through a gradual access of intimacy, full appreciation; here the magic and everything else are in the words. It is the same, for bare emotion apart from character, in such poems as "A Deep-Sworn Vow," where the words accumulate by the simplest means an intolerable

excitement, where the words are, called as they may be from whatever source, in an ultimate sense their own meaning.

> Others because you did not keep
> That deep-sworn vow have been friends of mine;
> Yet always when I look death in the face,
> When I clamber to the heights of sleep,
> Or when I grow excited with wine,
> Suddenly I meet your face.

Possibly all poetry should be read as this poem is read, and no poetry greatly valued that cannot be so read. Such is one ideal towards which reading tends; but to apply it as a standard of judgment we should first have to assume for the poetic intelligence absolute autonomy and self-perfection for all its works. Actually, autonomy and self-perfection are relative and depend upon a series of agreements or conventions between the poet and his readers, which alter continually, as to what must be represented by the fundamental power of language (itself a relatively stable convention) and what, on the other hand, may be adequately represented by mere reference, sign, symbol, or blueprint indication. Poetry is so little autonomous from the technical point of view that the greater part of a given work must be conceived as the manipulation of conventions that the reader will, or will not, take for granted; these being crowned, or animated, emotionally transformed, by what the poet actually represents, original or not, through his mastery of poetic language. Success is provisional, seldom complete, and never permanently complete. The vitality or letter of a convention may perish although the form persists. *Romeo and Juliet* is less successful today than when produced because the conventions of honor, family authority, and blood-feud no longer animate and justify the action; and if the play survives it is partly because certain other conventions of human character do remain vital, but more because Shakespeare is the supreme master of representation through the reality of language alone. Similarly with Dante; with the cumulative disintegration, even for Catholics, of medieval Christianity as the ultimate convention of human life, the success of *The Divine Comedy* comes more and more to depend on the exhibition of character and

the virtue of language alone—which may make it a greater, not a lesser poem. On the other hand, it often happens that a poet's ambition is such that, in order to get his work done at all, he must needs set up new conventions or radically modify old ones which fatally lack that benefit of form which can be conferred only by public recognition. The form which made his poems available was only gradually conferred upon the convention of evil in Baudelaire and, as we may see in translations with contrasting emphases, its limits are still subject to debate; in his case the more so because the life of his language depended more than usual on the viability of the convention.

Let us apply these notions, which ought so far to be commonplace, to the later work of Yeats, relating them especially to the predominant magical convention therein. When Yeats came of poetic age he found himself, as Blake had before him, and even Wordsworth, but to a worse extent, in a society whose conventions extended neither intellectual nor moral authority to poetry; he found himself in a rational but deliberately incomplete, because progressive, society. The *emotion* of thought, for poetry, was gone, along with the emotion of religion and the emotion of race—the three sources and the three aims of the great poetry of the past. Tyndall and Huxley are the villains, Yeats records in his Autobiographies, as Blake recorded Newton; there were other causes, but no matter, these names may serve as symbols. And the dominant aesthetics of the time were as rootless in the realm of poetic import and authority as the dominant conventions. Art for Art's sake was the cry, the Ivory Tower the retreat, and Walter Pater's luminous languor and weak Platonism the exposition. One could say anything but it would mean nothing. The poets and society both, for opposite reasons, expected the poet to produce either exotic and ornamental mysteries or lyrics of mood; the real world and its significance were reserved mainly to the newer sciences, though the novelists and the playwrights might poach if they could. For a time Yeats succumbed, as may be seen in his early work, even while he attempted to escape; and of his poetic generation he was the only one to survive and grow in stature. He came under the influence of the French Symbolists, who gave him the clue and the hint of an external structure but nothing much to put in it. He read, with a dictionary, Villiers de L'Ile Adam's *Axel's Castle,* and so

came to be included in Edmund Wilson's book of that name—although not, as Wilson himself shows, altogether correctly. For he began in the late 'nineties, as it were upon his own account, to quench his thirst for reality by creating authority and significance and reference in the three fields where they were lacking. He worked into his poetry the substance of Irish mythology and Irish politics and gave them a symbolism, and he developed his experiences with Theosophy and Rosicrucianism into a body of conventions adequate, for him, to animate the concrete poetry of the soul that he wished to write. He did not do these things separately; the mythology, the politics, and the magic are conceived, through the personalities that reflected them, with an increasing unity of apprehension. Thus more than any poet of our time he has restored to poetry the actual emotions of race and religion and what we call abstract thought. Whether we follow him in any particular or not, the general poetic energy which he liberated is ours to use if we can. If the edifice that he constructed seems personal, it is because he had largely to build it for himself, and that makes it difficult to understand in detail except in reference to the peculiar unity which comes from their mere association in his life and work. Some of the mythology and much of the politics, being dramatized and turned into emotion, are part of our common possessions. But where the emphasis has been magical, whether successfully or not, the poems have been misunderstood, ignored, and the actual emotion in them which is relevant to us all decried and underestimated, merely because the magical mode of thinking is foreign to our own and when known at all is largely associated with quackery and fraud.

We do not make that mistake—which is the mistake of unwillingness—with Dante or the later Eliot, because, although the substance of their modes of thinking is equally foreign and magical, it has the advantage of a rational superstructure that persists and which we can convert to our own modes if we will. Yeats lacks, as we have said, the historical advantage and with it much else; and the conclusion cannot be avoided that this lack prevents his poetry from reaching the first magnitude. But there are two remedies we may apply, which will make up, not for the defect of magnitude, but for the defect of structure. We can read the magical philosophy in his verse *as if* it were converted into the contemporary psychology with

which its doctrines have so much in common. We find little difficulty in seeing Freud's preconscious as a fertile myth and none at all in the general myth of extroverted and introverted personality; and these may be compared with, respectively, Yeats' myth of *Spiritus Mundi* and the Phases of the Moon: the intention and the scope of the meaning are identical. So much for a secular conversion. The other readily available remedy is this: to accept Yeats' magic literally as a machinery of meaning, to search out the prose parallels and reconstruct the symbols he uses on their own terms in order to come on the emotional reality, if it is there, actually in the poems —when the machinery may be dispensed with. This method has the prime advantage over secular conversion of keeping judgment in poetic terms, with the corresponding disadvantage that it requires more time and patience, more "willing suspension of disbelief," and a stiffer intellectual exercise all around. But exegesis is to be preferred to conversion on still another ground, which may seem repellent: that magic, in the sense that we all experience it, is nearer the represented emotions that concern us in poetry than psychology, as a generalized science, can ever be. We are all, without conscience, magicians in the dark.

But even the poems of darkness are read in the light. I cannot, of course, make a sure prognosis; because in applying either remedy the reader is, really, doctoring himself as much as Yeats. Only this much is sure: that the reader will come to see the substantial unity of Yeats' work, that it is the same mind stirring behind the poems on Crazy Jane and the Bishop, on Cuchulain, on Swift, the political poems, the biographical and the doctrinal—a mind that sees the fury and the mire and the passion of the dawn as contrary aspects of the real world. It is to be expected that many poems will fail in part and some entirely, and if the chief, magic will not be the only cause of failure. The source of a vision puts limits upon its expression which the poet cannot well help overpassing. "The limitation of his view," Yeats wrote of Blake, "was from the very intensity of his vision; he was a too-literal realist of imagination, as others are of nature"; and the remark applies to himself. But there will be enough left to make the labor of culling worth all its patience and time. Before concluding, I propose to spur the reader, or inadvertently dismay him, by presenting briefly a few examples of the sort of reconstructive labor he will have to do and the sort

of imaginative assent he may have to attempt in order to enter or dismiss the body of the poems.

As this is a mere essay in emphasis, let us bear the emphasis in, by repeating, on different poems, the sort of commentary laid out above on "The Second Coming" and "The Magi," using this time "Byzantium" and "Sailing to Byzantium." Byzantium is for Yeats, so to speak, the heaven of man's mind; there the mind or soul dwells in eternal or miraculous form; there all things are possible because all things are known to the soul. Byzantium has both a historical and an ideal form, and the historical is the exemplar, the dramatic witness, of the ideal. Byzantium represents both a dated epoch and a recurrent state of insight, when nature is magical, that is, at the beck of mind, and magic is natural—a practical rather than a theoretic art. If with these notions in mind we compare the two poems named we see that the first, called simply "Byzantium," is like certain cantos in the *Paradiso* the poetry of an intense and condensed declaration of doctrine; not emotion put into doctrine from outside, but doctrine presented as emotion. I quote the second stanza.

> Before me floats an image, man or shade,
> Shade more than man, more image than a shade;
> For Hades' bobbin bound in mummy-cloth
> May unwind the winding path;
> A mouth that has no moisture and no breath
> Breathless mouths may summon;
> I hail the superhuman;
> I call it death-in-life and life-in-death.

The second poem, "Sailing to Byzantium," rests upon the doctrine but is not a declaration of it. It is, rather, the doctrine in action, the doctrine actualized in a personal emotion resembling that of specific prayer. This is the emotion of the flesh where the other was the emotion of the bones. The distinction should not be too sharply drawn. It is not the bones of doctrine but the emotion of it that we should be aware of in reading the more dramatic poem: and the nearer they come to seeming two reflections of the same thing the better both poems will be. What must be avoided is a return

to the poem of doctrine with a wrong estimation of its value gained by confusion of the two poems. Both poems are serious in their own kind, and the reality of each must be finally in its own words whatever clues the one supplies to the other. I quote the third stanza.

> O sages standing in God's holy fire
> As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
> Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
> And be the singing-masters of my soul.
> Consume my heart away; sick with desire
> And fastened to a dying animal
> It knows not what it is; and gather me
> Into the artifice of eternity.

We must not, for example, accept "perne in a gyre" in this poem merely because it is part of the doctrine upon which the poem rests. Its magical reference may be too explicit for the poem to digest. It may be merely part of the poem's intellectual machinery, something that will *become* a dead commonplace once its peculiarity has worn out. Its meaning, that is, may turn out not to participate in the emotion of the poem: which is an emotion of aspiration. Similarly a note of aspiration would have been injurious to the stanza quoted from "Byzantium" above.

Looking at other poems as examples, the whole problem of exegesis may be put another way; which consists in joining two facts and observing their product. There is the fact that again and again in Yeats' prose, both in that which accompanies the poems and that which is independent of them, poems and fragments of poems are introduced at strategic points, now to finish off or clinch an argument by giving it as proved, and again merely to balance argument with witness from another plane. *A Vision* is punctuated by five poems. And there is the complementary fact that, when one has read the various autobiographies, introductions, and doctrinal notes and essays, one continually finds echoes, phrases, and developments from the prose in the poems. We have, as Wallace Stevens says, the prose that wears the poem's guise at last; and we have, too, the poems turning backwards, reilluminating or justifying the prose from the material of which they

sprang. We have, to import the dichotomy which T. S. Eliot made for his own work, the prose writings discovering and buttressing the ideal, and we have the poems which express as much as can be actualized—given as concrete emotion—of what the prose discovered or envisaged. The dichotomy is not so sharp in Yeats as in Eliot. Yeats cannot, such is the unity of his apprehension, divide his interests. There is one mind employing two approaches in the labor of representation. The prose approach lets in much that the poetic approach excludes; it lets in the questionable, the uncertain, the hypothetic, and sometimes the incredible. The poetic approach, using the same material, retains, when it is successful, only what is manifest, the emotion that can be made actual in a form of words that need only to be understood, not argued. If props of argument and vestiges of idealization remain, they must be felt as qualifying, not arguing, the emotion. It should only be remembered and repeated that the poet invariably requires more machinery to secure *his* effects—the machinery of his whole life and thought—than the reader requires to secure what he takes as the *poem's* effects; and that, as readers differ, the poet cannot calculate what is necessary to the poem and what is not. There is always the débris to be cut away.

In such a fine poem as "A Prayer for My Son," for example, Yeats cut away most of the débris himself, and it is perhaps an injury to judgment provisionally to restore it. Yet to this reader at least the poem seems to richen when it is known from what special circumstance the poem was freed. As it stands we can accept the symbols which it conspicuously contains—the strong ghost, the devilish things, and the holy writings—as drawn from the general stock of literary conventions available to express the evil predicament in which children and all innocent beings obviously find themselves. Taken so, it is a poem of natural piety. But for Yeats the conventions were not merely literary but were practical expressions of the actual terms of the predicament, and his poem is a prayer of dread and supernatural piety. The experience which led to the poem is recounted in *A Packet for Ezra Pound*. When his son was still an infant Yeats was told through the mediumship of his wife that the Frustrators or evil spirits would henceforth "attack my health and that of my children, and one afternoon, knowing from the smell of burnt feathers that one of my children

would be ill within three hours, I felt before I could recover self-control the mediaeval helpless horror of witchcraft." The child *was* ill. It is from this experience that the poem seems to have sprung, and the poem preserves all that was actual behind the private magical conventions Yeats used for himself. The point is that the reader has a richer poem if he can substitute the manipulative force of Yeats' specific conventions for the general literary conventions. Belief or imaginative assent is no more difficult for either set. It is the emotion that counts.

That is one extreme to which the poems run—the extreme convention of personal thought. Another extreme is that exemplified in "A Prayer for My Daughter," where the animating conventions *are* literary and the piety *is* natural, and in the consideration of which it would be misleading to introduce the magical convention as more than a foil. As a foil it is nevertheless present; his magical philosophy, all the struggle and warfare of the intellect, is precisely what Yeats in this poem *puts out of mind,* in order to imagine his daughter living in innocence and beauty, custom and ceremony.

A third extreme is that found in the sonnet "Leda and the Swan," where there is an extraordinary sensual immediacy—the words meet and move like speaking lips—and a profound combination of the generally available or literary symbol and the hidden, magical symbol of the intellectual, philosophical, impersonal order. Certain longer poems and groups of poems, especially the series called "A Woman Young and Old," exhibit the extreme of combination as well or better; but I want the text on the page.

> A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
> Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
> By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
> He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.
>
> How can those terrified vague fingers push
> The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
> And how can body, laid in that white rush,
> But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead.
Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

It should be observed that in recent years new images, some from the life of Swift, and some from the Greek mythology, have been spreading through Yeats' poems; and of Greek images he has used especially those of Oedipus and Leda, of Homer and Sophocles. But they are not used as we think the Greeks used them, nor as mere drama, but deliberately, after the magical tradition, both to represent and hide the myths Yeats has come on in his own mind. Thus "Leda and the Swan" can be read on at least three distinct levels of significance, none of which interferes with the others: the levels of dramatic fiction, of condensed insight into Greek mythology, and a third level of fiction and insight combined, as we said, to represent and hide a magical insight. This third level is our present concern. At this level the poem presents an interfusion among the normal terms of the poem two of Yeats' fundamental magical doctrines in emotional form. The doctrines are put by Yeats in the following form in his essay on magic: "That the borders of our mind are ever shifting, and that many minds can flow into one another, as it were, and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy . . . . That this great mind can be evoked by symbols." Copulation is the obvious nexus for spiritual as well as physical seed. There is also present I think some sense of Yeats' doctrine of Annunciation and the Great Year, the Annunciation, in this case, that produced Greek culture. It is a neat question for the reader, so far as this poem is concerned, whether the poetic emotion springs from the doctrine and seizes the myth for a safe home and hiding, or whether the doctrine is correlative to the emotion of the myth. In neither case does the magic matter as such; it has become poetry, and of extreme excellence in its order. To repeat the interrogatory formula with which we began the commentary on "The Second Coming," is the magical material in these poems incorporated in them by something like

organic reference or is its presence merely rhetorical? The reader will answer one way or the other, as, to his rational imagination, to all the imaginative understanding he can bring to bear, it either seems to clutter the emotion and deaden the reality, or seems rather, as I believe, to heighten the emotional reality and thereby extend its reference to what we call the real world. Once the decision is made, the magic no longer exists; we have the poetry.

Other approaches to Yeats' poetry would have produced different emphases, and this approach, which has emphasized little but the magical structure of Yeats' poetic emotions, and has made that emphasis with an ulterior purpose: to show that magic may be a feature of a rational imagination. This approach should be combined with others, or should have others combined with it, for perspective and reduction. No feature of a body of poetry can be as important as it seems in discussion. Above all, then, this approach through the magical emphasis should be combined with the approach of plain reading—which is long reading and hard reading—plain reading of the words, that they may sink in and do as much of their own work as they can. One more thing: When we call man a rational animal we mean that reason is his great myth. Reason is plastic and takes to any form provided. The rational imagination in poetry, as elsewhere, can absorb magic as a provisional method of evocative and heuristic thinking, but it cannot be based upon it. In poetry, and largely elsewhere, imagination is based upon the reality of words and the emotion of their joining. Yeats' magic, then, like every other feature of his experience, is rational as it reaches words; otherwise it is his privation, and ours, because it was the rational defect of our society that drove him to it.

MR. BURKE AND THE HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT

Allen Tate

In this brief essay I shall try to raise a few questions suggested by Mr. Kenneth Burke's able paper, "Symbolic War," published in the Summer, 1936, issue of *The Southern Review*. Mr. Burke alone of the extreme left-wing critics seems to me to possess the historical and philosophical learning necessary to the serious treatment of the literary problems of Marxism: before his "conversion" to Communism he had subjected himself to a rigorous critical discipline. Although Mr. Burke is a political partisan, he approaches the new radical literature in the spirit of inquiry, and for that reason, I suppose, he was subjected to some bitter obloquy by his colleagues at the American Writers' Congress held in New York in April, 1935.(See the volume *American Writers' Congress,* International Publishers, p. 165 ff.) At this congress Mr. Burke was attacked for describing the class-struggle as a myth competing with other myths for supremacy in the modern world: at that stage of the discussion Mr. Burke was compelled to say, "I was speaking technically before a group of literary experts, hence I felt justified in using the word in a special sense. A poet's myths, I tried to make clear, are *real*"—an effort that won only moderate success before an audience of which Mr. Granville Hicks, as a literary expert, was a member.

In "Symbolic War" Mr. Burke begins: "Poetry, I take it, is a matter of welfare—as religion and politics are matters of welfare. And welfare, in this imperfect world, is grounded in material necessities." It is true

enough to be a truism, and for that reason the statement is very likely, if it mean anything, to turn out to be as false as it is true. The chief trouble is in the term "matter." The phrase "is a matter of" may mean "depends upon," "is a reflection of," or "is a way of achieving"; but these phrases all mean something different. I am not chopping Mr. Burke's logic. I am pointing out that the ablest logician in the Communist camp, when confronted with the question of the economic base of literature, is driven to subsume so much under so vague a general term that he ends up with the assumption of a "truth" that it is his business to prove. The burden placed upon "welfare" is more than it can be made to bear.

Mr. Burke goes on to say: "The dispossessed man is in a different 'environment' from the man who enjoys the fruits of the society's wealth. He has a different 'relation to the productive forces.' And in so far as this situation sharpens his fears, hopes, and conflicts, it helps to condition his 'morality.' " That is to say, under finance-capitalism we do not have a community of culture because we do not have an ordered society in which every member has an economic stake. Within the general "culture" we get the beginnings of a new "culture" that may or may not replace the old. There is thus the rise of "class-consciousness." But Mr. Burke is aware there is no one-to-one relation, in the individual person, between his economic class and his morality. "We can belong," he says, "in as many classifications as scientists or philosophers care to invent." And this fact is largely due to another fact—that our "economic environment," our specific relation to the "forces of production," is not our total environment. For Mr. Burke insists upon a distinction between the merely historical environment—an abstraction resulting from the simplification of our personal situation into a historical pattern, Marxism, agrarianism, etc. —and the "human environment"; this latter, Mr. Burke calls the "resources of the body itself" from which rise certain "superstructural counterparts," love, hate, desire for mobility, intelligence. (I cannot see mobility as coördinate with love, hate, and intelligence, but it is worth recording that Mr. Burke is the first Communist critic to come to my notice who seems to allow any autonomy to intelligence apart from the all-engrossing economic environment of the orthodox Marxist.) In some

sense the relation of the superstructure of love, hate, intelligence, to the "resources of the body" corresponds to the superstructure of culture that a class erects upon its economic environment. I wish Mr. Burke had pursued this correspondence further and had isolated the dynamic factor at work in each relationship. I think we shall see in a moment that Mr. Burke is here almost a pure determinist, that the economic environment of the class and the human environment, the "resources of the body," respectively condition or perhaps actually effect the rise of their superstructures of general culture and personal experience. And it is this determinism, it seems to me, which cripples Mr. Burke's theory of literature, making it possible for him to take seriously certain modern works that merely illustrate new combinations of economic forces; I refer to such examples of "proletarian" writing as are contained in *Proletarian Literature in the United States* (International Publishers). Apart from the contributions by Edwin Seaver and Robert Cantwell, that volume seems to me to be almost worthless; and so it seems to Mr. Burke, but his own political bias commits him to the respectful consideration of unfavorable analysis which is too often mollified by *but* and *perhaps*. Of a very bad story he writes: "Ben Field's 'Cow' is interesting as a problem in propaganda because of its vigorous attempt to combat anti-Semitism by destroying the stereotype image of the Jew and assembling a different cluster of traits in its stead. Perhaps he approaches his task a little too head on."

Of the conflict between the economic environment and the human environment Mr. Burke says: "Many of the recent literary battles hinge about this issue." Let us see in just what terms Mr. Burke understands the issue as it affects literature.

> The presence of this "human" environment, the "natural" frame of reference that is wider than the "historical," may be discussed as the tendency of the poet to "transcend" the peculiar economic necessities of his times. Not even a fish could be said to live in a totally different environment from man. The "moralities" of man and fish must tend to overlap, destroying the symmetry of complete differentiation, in so far as both "classes" live by respiration and locomotion. A happy translator might do a fairly reputable job at

> turning a fish's delight in gills and fins into a glorification of lungs and legs.

I very much fear that in this passage Mr. Burke has committed himself to the metaphorical logic of popular journalese. (His partial awareness of this is in the quotes around "transcend.") If the historical environment is the product of historical and scientific method, it is, on its necessarily quantitative basis, infinitely wider than the human environment; so the poet in achieving the human point of view probably engages in a procedure that can in no wise be conveyed by the verb *to transcend.* He is more likely proceeding to his objective with an entirely different quality of intelligence from that employed in isolating the economic or historical environment, a kind of cognition which differs from the historical not merely in being wider or narrower but in being, apart from physical range, intensive. Mr. Burke is, of course, in the passage about the fish, adumbrating a theory of the universal in art: it is preëminently an eighteenth-century theory couched in a biological analogy dear to the nineteenth. The universal is the general average of observation drawn from the *widest* possible field. It is not a universal of implicit intensiveness, but a universal of scientific formulation. Instead of a proposition like "Man is vile," we get "Man is a vertebrate."

But Mr. Burke is aware that this kind of formula in literature has its dangers, not because it is an inadequate formula but because its adherents may push it too far.

> The oversimplifying advocate of "proletarian" art would stress the historic environment to the exclusion of all else (and would then invent all sorts of subterfuges and epicycles to explain a liking he might have for Dante or Aeschylus, perhaps finally deciding that they were "workers" in their field). And the oversimplifying advocate of the universally human would lay all emphasis upon the continuity of "man's burden" throughout the ages, as he incessantly confronts the critical events of birth, growth, love, union, separation, initiation, sorrow, fear, death, and the like.

I do not know if Mr. Burke is driven into the subterfuges that he seems a little jibingly to attribute to his colleagues; I gather that he is

not. Nor is he committed to the catalogue of spurious universals that he finds in the repertoire of the nonproletarian writer. I cannot imagine why Mr. Burke ridicules his own theory, but I should like to guess why: he does not believe in it, but he cannot allow himself to think up any other because he has previously subscribed to a theory of the relation of the human and the economic environments, a theory that misleads him into the belief that the human is wide and abstract, the historical narrow and concrete, and that the latter may be transcended by the former, and indeed must be transcended at least, one supposes, to a certain degree, if the artist is to escape the stigma of mere contemporaneity, a stigma earned by an excessive zeal for propaganda.

The question that arises here, and it is a question that I should like to see Mr. Burke undertake to answer, is the extent to which the artist, *qua* artist, must transcend the mere historical environment. That is to say, in what proportion shall the two environments be mixed? In Mr. Burke's analysis of the artist's situation into these two environments, the question that I have just posed must, I think, be necessarily asked in those terms —the terms, not of fusion, but of mixture. Mr. Burke asks: "Might we not suspect that, unless men were brutes or gods (and Aristotle reminds us that they are not either) they must inevitably exemplify imagination and propaganda both?" That sounds reasonable. But what does "exemplify" mean; and are imagination and propaganda coördinate terms? Upon close examination most of Mr. Burke's propositions about this problem of propaganda turn out to be merely rhetorical logic—when he is not actually ridiculing his own terms. The distinction between imagination and propaganda is rhetorical. When a critic as astute as Burke falls afoul of terms we are entitled to look for a very dark nigger hiding in the rhetorical woodpile.

That nigger, as I dimly see him, looks like this: he is the effort of a profound critic to conceal from himself the true nature of his problem in order to justify the literary practice of his political allies. One more quotation and my exhibit of this tendency in Mr. Burke's essay—a tendency that does not appear in *Permanence and Change*—will be complete:

> One may hypothetically picture the two opposite procedures: that of the "partisan" writer, who begins by discovering a "propaganda

> situation," and proceeds to exploit it by inventing characters to fit; and in contrast, there is the "imaginative" writer, who might begin with an attachment to some very appealing character, and in the course of depicting him, might show him at work in some propaganda situation, such as the harboring of a labor leader hunted by vigilantes. Ultimately, there need be nothing at odds between the two approaches: an expression that is not truncated will encompass both. But if the partisan factor is emphasized with too much greed, it may lead to schematization of character, with nothing of appeal in so far as the situation itself lacks appeal.

That too looks sensible—but to me the whole passage is meaningless. Is the artist rendering his subject, or is he merely mixing ingredients—is he at liberty to *emphasize* this and to pass over that? (Mr. Burke's verbs will bear watching.) And what is Mr. Burke going to do about the writer who begins "with an attachment to some very appealing character" whose life is so lived that he has never seen a labor leader and never even heard of vigilantes? I personally know dozens of people, of fathomless interest as characters, who are like that. Will Mr. Burke reply with the orthodox Communist reply, that such a writer, dealing with such characters, is outside the Great Tradition, that he is frivolous, irrelevant, and a disguised apologist of capitalism—simply because implicit in this writer's characters there is no "propaganda situation," because the writer ignores the "economic environment" as it is defined by the Marxists? I do not think that Mr. Burke will say this; but I am not sure.

Mr. Burke's aesthetic standards are offended by the propagandist excesses of his colleagues; but the only warning that he issues to them in "Symbolic War" is an appeal for moderation; he asks them *not to go too far*. He asks them not to mix too much of the ingredient of propaganda into the gruel of art. He does not ask them to do some fundamental aesthetic thinking that might eliminate altogether the need for compromise between the different pairs of antinomies that he describes: propaganda and imagination, historical and human environments, etc.

How far is too far? Mr. Burke must obviously be an opportunist in this, since on principle he cannot establish a point at which the poet must eschew propaganda; Mr. Burke will have to decide each case as it appears.

And it seems to me that this is due to the underlying significance of his dichotomy between propaganda and imagination, between the historical and the human environments. For, in the long run, from whichever end of the dilemma the artist may begin, he is cut off, under Mr. Burke's theory, from the exercise of the critical intellect.

It is astonishing to observe that political revolutionists evince such timidity in aesthetic theory. Mr. Burke's theory of literature is the standard eighteenth-century belief in the inherent dignity of the subject: some subjects are good, some bad. It is too large a field of discussion to describe here, yet the equivalent for literature of Mr. Burke's "historical environment" is the decorous subject that from the time of Addison dominated criticism until the time of Matthew Arnold. The very use of the term "sincerity" by many Communist critics today is closely related to Arnold's notion that it is the same as high seriousness. On this point Mr. Cleanth Brooks is instructive:

> If Arnold states that high seriousness "comes from absolute sincerity," one remembers Coleridge's objection to the play of wit because it implied "a leisure and self-possession incompatible with the steady fervor of a mind possessed and filled with the grandeur of its subject." Indeed, Arnold's high seriousness amounts to little more than this *steady fervor*.

The steady fervor about the Cause—Victorian morality or Marxian doctrine—cannot admit of critical examination; and, under Mr. Burke's theory, least of all can it admit of the exercise of the critical wit which tends to place all "causes" in the whole context of experience. The steady fervor cannot be fused into an integral expression of sincerity and intelligence; they come together in a mixture.

I have indicated that Mr. Burke sees in his "historical environment" the concrete reality, and in the "human environment" the wider abstract medium through which artists transcend the merely local view. Yet it is apparent that the act of transcending carries the artist over into a very thin realm of miscellaneous emotions in which Mr. Burke obviously feels very little conviction; he is aware of a vague duty to do justice to the eternal verities—love, union, hate, and the rest. They are all, of course, only a

miscellany of Platonic abstractions, and although Mr. Burke calls them the "human environment" they actually have no environment at all: they were once the decorous subjects of eighteenth-century poetry and criticism. They were susceptible to the application of Coleridge's steady fervor. I need not quote exhibits of the poetic language appropriate to that zeal: criticism in the last twenty years has sufficiently described the state of the poetic vocabulary at the end of the nineteenth century. From the neo-classical belief in decorum there is a direct development of theory and practice through the Romantics and Victorians into a belief in the higher decorum, which makes the poet the "unacknowledged legislator" and, for Arnold, the Teacher.

And that is all that Mr. Burke's theory, it seems to me, allows him to be. The poet may be a purveyor of the eternal verities, and thus I suppose a capitalist poet in the "traditional" culture; or he may be concerned with the historical environment of Marxism—in which case he is still a teacher.

Mr. Burke's scheme of the two general procedures possible to the poet seems to me vulnerable at two points. First, the distinction between the human environment and the historical environment is a distinction without a difference. They are both realms of practical abstractions for the service of the will—the will of the individual prophet-teacher and the will of the radical reformer. And secondly Mr. Burke's scheme offers only a mechanical explanation of the relation of the poet to his material: in making the poet's apprehension of "ideas" explicit and self-conscious he commits himself to a theory closely resembling that of Mr. Paul Elmer More. The anomaly of this association of names disappears when one remembers that there has been no general revolution in criticism since Dryden. For, after the rise of materialism under Hobbes and Locke,* the poet lost confidence in his own special function—the whole and inutile creation of the human experience—and began to compete with the scientist, until at last the poet has begun *to be* a social scientist. The practical abstraction has usurped the whole realm of the poet. Criticism for two hundred years has been based, not upon Shakespeare, for whom the "idea" has no meaning apart from the concrete experience, but upon the weaker

* See Cleanth Brooks, *Three Revolutions in Poetry*, II, "Wit and High Seriousness." *The Southern Review*, Autumn (1935), pp. 328-338.

side of Milton, upon his professed mission as Teacher and not upon his performance as a poet.

The mechanism of the abstract idea underlying Mr. Burke's theory has dominated our criticism for two centuries. Its dominion over Mr. Burke's intelligence witnesses the absence of revolutionary critical thought in a political movement whose avowed aim is revolution. If among the American Communists there were any radical thinking in literary criticism I think Mr. Burke would be aware of it, or we might expect him to supply it. Mr. Burke's case for the "proletarian" writers is persuasive, but it is not convincing on the special ground of their originality. Some of these writers are interesting, but they are interesting, from the strict critical point of view, not for their zeal in reform, but rather for whatever merit they have achieved as writers. They have most of the merits and most of the defects of other writers living within the mentality of the present age.

The test of the economics of literature is in the long run the test of time. And time here signifies not merely the stability of an economic system but the continuity of a certain way of life. Whether a Communist economic order in America—whatever it may do in Europe—can achieve a continuous pattern of life is debatable; it is debatable equally for and against. Finance-capitalism has developed on the economic side in well-defined and predictable directions; on the social, moral, and religious side there has been steady deterioration. A system of production may be made to work a high efficiency without in the least effecting for society a moral pattern durable enough for men to depend upon; without, moreover, making any sort of pattern necessary or desirable. This is indeed inevitable when men have no moral control over the method of production. And here it is difficult to see any fundamental moral difference between the giant corporation of the present and the giant supercorporation, which is the state, of tomorrow.

Communist literature gives us no clue to such a difference. In Mr. Burke's own analysis of the situation of the American Communist writer, the novelist and the poet must be preoccupied, directly or indirectly, with the "historical environment," a picture of men abstracted into two warring classes, capitalist and worker. That is the subject of greatest "reality" to the Communist writer. Yet so far as successful works of literature are concerned the test of their reality is not the historical and political con-

viction of the authors, but the works themselves. It is probable that political conviction transformed into the reality of experience based upon a definite, and not merely a hoped for, order of life is the matrix of literature. There is no evidence that Shakespeare was aware, in terms of modern historical thinking, of the conflict of dying feudalism and rising capitalism. For him it was an inexhaustible subject—but not in those terms.

SEVEN POEMS

Randall Jarrell

A MAN SICK with whirling,
A sensibility brutal as a thumb:
Even the idiots clench their spoons,
Rap and call: Great changes have come.

Blood sticks to the platters;
The hangman holds the judge's seat.
Wisdom is choked with violence,
The wise can only vacillate.

Necessity like a marionette
Flops in the dust; the knitters yawn
Or hold the yarn its blood has drenched
Before the trunk—the head grins like a dog.

Call up the legions! that monstrous child,
Fathered by Reason, the despair of Time,
Who once like an idol overstrode
The streets that glittered with his blood,—

Climbs to the long roll of the drums,
Wearying, wearying, lifts his huge head
To see with helpless and darkening eyes
The tyrant standing among his torturers.

A DESCRIPTION OF SOME CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS

The torn hillside with its crooked hands
Where Tom lay beneath the banks of light
Grows shadier, and through its shades
The sun looks seldomer. The laurels are faded.

Ah, how it blazed! the splintered leaves
Burned against your forehead, and your tongue
Grew thick with wisdom; till you laughed, and fled
Like a shadow from that senseless shape.

Then that pale life—scars on the tree—
Where, listlessly, among the mushrooms of your hill,
You stared at your comrades—fatal wax-works!—
And saw, pale, virtuous, half-concealed,

Hovering over each leafy and swollen cheek,
The blue transparency of a smile.
This was the last of that furious speech—
The lustre, the wreathing of the shade.

Strewn like sweat, like dropped jewels,
They lay there; their ringed mouths gaped
Like wounds about to speak, their eyes
Shrank back from those curved faces,

Staring, coagulated with light.
Tell how you were hunted by cunning death,

That night when, stumbling, soaked with blood,
You sank there with open mouth

Until the hunters came, and kneeling there
Lifted you, and saw covering your face
That greedy and imperishable arrogance . . .
Man's choice, and man's magnificence

Grow monstrous, and unclouded by
The empty measure of his breath.
How can the grave hold, a statue name
Blood dried in that intolerable glare?

They stand like shattered and untopped columns,
The barbarous foliage of an age
Necessity instructed and destroyed.
There is no hesitation in those eyes.

THE INDIAN

AMONG THE shades and cries of the night
I dreamed I wandered—by a stranger's shore
I wept, and weighed the cumbering pack.
Cartridges are more than furs: I saw their light
Gleam for a moment in those fading eyes.

I kept the scalps, the cartridges—the bolts
Of madras blanched by a fiercer sun
Swept from my wives' long shoulders; I still felt
A prescience in the rifle's sound,
A new world rising out of the smoke.

A POEM

Fat, aging, the child clinging to her hand,
She sits by the empty bandstand,
And whispers, gazing, to that mute form
The patient child cannot see.

So they all whisper to you—you smile your country smile,
And listen dumbly; under the lace,
The schooled names—Maintenon, Montespan—
You lift your bleeding and speechless face.

The flame whirls up; time, and the scaffoldings
Swim like black phantoms through a darker waste—
The gutted balconies, bent under the moat,
Wake to some diver's peering and distorted face . . .

So the drowning globe contracts for her.
Inhuman, lunar, like a shocked dream,
Some cracked and glutting image of the past
Welters along the margin of the sea.

Poor Asphaltine! take fern for epitaph.
The kings pass, nodding over the horses' heads—
How many a mile of leather, bone, and hair,
Red rust and powdery blood, I know not . . . we were once

Sheltered by the trees' spirits, and the crumbling vine,
The old bear, humble, tentative—these were to us

Images that were meaningless; we fell, we fell.
Gas, the machine-guns enfilading the square,

The shell-torn tenements—some shot-down bomber
Blazing here, under the searchlights' long-drawn lines—
Here are our commentators; under the gliding flare,
Shapeless, masked, your eyes glassed in,

You stare at us grimly; as the years grate by,
You look aghast at us—you lift your head,
Blinded and deafened, sick with the bursting smoke,
And laugh out with joy. O king of the age!

OLD POEMS

I KNEW YOU once so well I know you still—
Neglectful now-not-loving I; yet what now seem
Anxious and haggard ways, you have because I had—
My blood that dried on you, and left you stained.
You shone once iron and violent as blood,
And like old blood, grew shriveled, black, and thin;
How can I love you—I think ruefully —
Whose beauties seem so harsh, and faults so plain?

And they reply: Think you to a later self
Yours any less will look? or wiser seem?
Blind to them you are; will later to later more;
And more times, O more times will groan
As anxiously. I mean more than songs: all doing done,
Once done, seems best undone—O well 'tis done!

KIRILOV ON A SKYSCRAPER

Something gnaws inside my head
That changes everything I see:
An indolent and cloudy time,
The treasures of a barbarous scene,—

What use the crow's malignant look
Or joints as aching as a song
To show that aimless dignity
And ease that even an eye can own?—

The faces by the parapet,
Infected with their gazing, glare
As savagely as though they'd build
Another Eden, and a fruit

To reave from us the knowledge that we got.
What's good or evil to the man
So soon diminished to a doll,
Too rapid to catch a window's stare?—

His love, his mother, ranged at them—
Too fast! too fast! They gaze at, in their hour,
One instant in one instant's world—
Mortality distending like a flower.

AN OLD SONG

A SHOE THAT I forgot to tie
Vexes me, and here I sit
Staring at it; passers-by,
Take your stand and gaze at it,
You remember more than I.

The mirror's lamentable change
And the old dispersing world—
If I remember after all,
There is nothing I would change,
There is nothing in that world

I would change, or live again.
How still the grave looks! in those depths
Even a soul might think it might escape
Even its punishment, or praise, or might endure
The altering ages in that altered shape;

And how could He judge? or judging, condemn
Those who, taken from His sight,
Nurtured in the coarse establishment of Time,
Fell, in loneliness and arrogance,
To haunt the empty portals of the night?

QUEEN MARY'S HAT

Crane Brinton

THERE ARE those who lament the passing of history as literature, history in dignified, many-volumed sets like those of Gibbon or Parkman. Clio, they feel, has been rudely brushed aside, and her place usurped by an unlovely outsider, a learned and myopic lady dispensing textbooks and monographs, a lady in no sense a member of the muses' band. Yet perhaps these mourners have been misled by a change of fashion. Their muse still lives, but they do not recognize her in her new clothes. She has turned to brevity, wit, skepticism, to emotions condensed in irony rather than diffused in oratory. Biography has been her predilection. She has been well served by men who were quite aware of her true identity—by a Lytton Strachey, a Philip Guedalla; even, in their unpedagogic moments, by a James Harvey Robinson, a Carl Becker. Only to more obtuse conservatives did Clio disappear at the death of Froude, Ranke, Motley, and their fellows.

For such conservatives Mr. H. A. L. Fisher's *History of Europe** will be welcome evidence that the muse has returned to dwell among us. There is no mistaking Mr. Fisher's devotion to the kind of historical writing current in the last century. These volumes are as solid and as determined as Queen Mary's hat, and like the defiance of Time by that majestic millinery, will be cherished by many excellent people as proof that even in this mad world the final victory will not go to lipstick, jazz, and *sur-réalisme*. True, there are only three volumes in Mr. Fisher's *History*

*Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. Three Volumes. $4.00 each.

of Europe, which is a bit skimpy for history in the grand style. There is, however, no questioning their position in the line of English historiography which runs from Gibbon to Froude and Seeley.

Mr. Fisher has a style which at once marks him off from the writers of textbooks and monographs, who, as teachers and scientists, have no need of a style. In his sentences, Gibbon echoes faintly down through Macaulay and the Oxford Union. In one of his first chapters he writes,

> It would be hardly possible to imagine a sharper contrast than that which distinguished the two leading states of Hellas who were now about to enter upon a twenty-seven years' war. A deliberate prudence was the mark of the Spartan, a vivacious and enterprising audacity of the Athenian. The Spartan loved his home, the Athenian sought adventure far and wide in foreign lands.

Antithesis is one of his favorite devices (incidentally, the last antithesis quoted above is misleading—the Spartans were neither traders nor colonists, but they were not exactly "home-lovers"). He stands a bit aloof from his subject, the better to pounce upon it as only an orator can. Indeed, the book is an excellent example of what Croce has called "oratorical history." Not only is the style oratorical; Mr. Fisher is pretty consciously endeavoring, as does the orator, to use words, ideas, images to draw upon the emotions of his audience.

The orator must not recoil before the commonplace. Mr. Fisher bravely faces the necessity of giving his readers what they expect.

> Men once embarked on the ocean of political strife are apt to be carried farther than they originally intended. In the hands of the younger Gracchus . . . One of the strongest forces in human society is imitation, and once settled in their new homes the Visigoths and Burgundians . . . Men are so constituted that they are prone to support a cause which they believe to be assured of victory. It was the achievement of this Jewish visionary [Marx] that he persuaded the intellectuals of the proletariat in many lands that their hour of triumph was at hand.

Occasionally, as in this last passage, Mr. Fisher mixes irony and sententiousness—not often a very inflammable mixture. He does not forget that he is writing for Anglo-Saxons.

> Compared to Alexander of Russia and the Austrian Metternich, the English Tory [Castlereagh] was an angel of liberal and enlightened good sense . . . The Constitution of England could be copied [in France]. The good humour, the moderation, the pleasant give-and-take, the graded loyalties which made the working of that Constitution successful were less easy to emulate . . . The French legislator did not hunt the fox.

All this is amusing enough, and not without a kernel of truth. Mr. Fisher's liberalism and patriotism combine to blind him badly, however, when he writes that England was in a "rare mood of vindictive passion" at the time of the 1918 election. Fox-hunting may have made the English upper-classes kindly, good-humored, and moderate; but the Cockney did not hunt the fox.

Again true to the traditions of his peers, Mr. Fisher is quite consciously a moralist. He believes with Lord Acton that the historian is a judge. Indeed, he informs us with evident pleasure that

> The long roll of great Englishmen opens at the beginning of the eighth century with the names of a scholar [Bede] and a missionary [Boniface]. Thus early did the Anglo-Saxons evince their passion for the improvement of mankind through religion and knowledge.

Partly as moralist, partly no doubt as lover of words, he labels Robespierre a "man-eating tiger" and writes of Louis Napoleon as "a man of forty, at once mystic and Lothario, looking like an opium eater, and speaking French like a foreigner." Only the moralist wrote of the treaty of Campoformio, "To this corrupt transaction the Austrian Government shamefully descended."

Mr. Fisher's metaphors, like his moral judgments, are emphatic and undisturbing to the conventional mind. Writing of the Bourbon Restoration in France in 1815, he concludes: "The plant of legitimacy failed to flourish upon soil still covered with the lava of revolution." If this is what literary skill does to history, let us be grateful for the plodding scholar who doesn't know how to write. "Legitimacy" was a popular slogan, spread if not invented by Talleyrand, and no nearer the complex realities of Restoration France than was "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" to those of revolutionary France. If Mr. Fisher means that the whole

Bourbon Restoration was bound to fail from the start simply because there had been a revolution in 1789, he is making an assertion not in accordance with modern scholarly opinion. The "lava of revolution" cooled and disintegrated very quickly into soil capable of supporting quite a range of institutions. But it is not very clear what Mr. Fisher does mean. Metaphors like this may move, and even persuade, but they unhappily fail to forward historical investigation.

Mr. Fisher's book is not, indeed, an addition to our knowledge, or even to our understanding. It is a competent, and as it nears our own times, often clear-sighted and intelligent, survey of European history. It lacks the dash and the gusto, as well as the modern-gospel flavor, of Mr. Wells's famous *Outline of History*, and its scope is much narrower. Mr. Fisher leaves out the geo-physics, the geology, the anthropology with which Mr. Wells entertained us; and his whole account is, despite appropriate nods to the arts and to industry, very near the old-fashioned "history as past politics." When he is content to drop metaphors and other oratorical devices, he can write clearly and well:

> What is new in the National Socialist movement [in Germany] is that centralization replaces the ancient federation, that the old civil service which had weathered the storm of the first revolution is broken down, and that militarism is no longer associated with an empire or with an aristocratic caste, but becomes enforced as the creed of an equalitarian democracy.

Yet the abiding impression the book leaves is best summed up in the word *conventional*. We never feel that Mr. Fisher is penetrating into new depths, that he is revealing something hitherto unknown. For one thing, it is very difficult to write on the scale of this book and avoid the conventional. Mr. Fisher's book is no longer than many American textbooks in the field, and like many of them, lacks color, variety, intimacy. Great history has to have many volumes. A résumé must always be unexciting, and not until 1800 does Mr. Fisher get much beyond a résumé.

But scale is not the sole reason for Mr. Fisher's failure to arouse his readers. He never tries to go very far beneath the surface of conventional judgments of nineteenth-century English liberalism. The French to him are ruled by "bureaucrats," the English by "civil servants." If he had

stopped and asked himself what is the difference between a bureaucrat and a civil servant, he might have made a discovery. Throughout he is interested in the narrative, rather than in the genetic, aspect of the past. He asks himself what happened rather than why things came about. Nor has he absorbed the work of contemporary scholars. He writes about Danton as though Mathiez had never written, about Metternich as though Srbik had never written, about the Directory as though Guyot had never written. About nationalism—at least outside of England—he has grave doubts. But on the whole he manages to look at the European situation in 1815, for instance, much as John Morley would have looked at it two generations ago. "Liberalism" and "legitimacy" are still for him the hero and the villain of the piece.

Clio is indeed no wanton. As Professor Kendrick humorously remarked quite recently in the pages of *The Southern Review,* the writing of history is a serious business. History cannot attain the emotional profundity of tragic drama, nor the sensuous oneness of lyric, nor even the concentration of the novel—of a *good* novel, we had better add. The historian is bound to be a more *pedestrian* person than poet or novelist. Yet surely great history implies depth, color, originality. You cannot compress the gifts of a Dante or a Shakespeare into the writing of history. But you can hold up as examples of great art, of writing that does open for the first time a new world, such histories as those of Thucydides, Tacitus, Gibbon, Parkman, even of Macaulay. And these men were all conscious artists—honest men, no doubt, but men not infected with the virus of "scientific" history.

It may be urged that it is as unfair to chide Mr. Fisher with being no Gibbon as it would be to chide Mr. Eugene O'Neill with being no Shakespeare. That is no doubt a valid point, especially as Mr. Fisher has made no immodest claims as to his own achievements. But the analogy is not perfect, for the writing of history is today in a position quite unlike that of any other kind of writing, and Mr. Fisher's book gives an excellent opportunity to make that position clear.

History is today most unhappily wavering between art and science. The full implications of the contrast between art and science offer a field for discussion which would soon burst the bounds of a short article. Here

it may be noted that, although Mr. Havelock Ellis may prove that in a higher sense art and science are one in the dance of life, for ordinary purposes there is one very clear practical distinction between the two. Science is a cumulative effort, and *for the scientist* it is sufficient to know the state at which his branch of science has arrived at the present moment. Archimedes, and even Newton, knew less about physics than does the humblest laboratory assistant today. Art, though it too may be in some senses cumulative, obviously does not build on, and then forget, its past. You cannot say that Rodin knew more (in any important sense) about art than did Phidias; you certainly cannot say that Rodin's work supplanted that of Phidias.

Both artist and scientist must strain after the new, the undiscovered, but in quite different ways. The scientist, especially in these days, may realize his highest hopes if he adds a tiny bit to the accumulated mass of knowledge attained by his predecessors. The artist cannot reproduce Rodin's "Thinker" varied only by a single muscle-bulge, or Vermeer's "View of Delft" with an extra cloud or two. He must produce something that is a *whole,* something into every part of which his original contribution has penetrated. He must not break completely with the past, no doubt, and his debt to his predecessors is perhaps greatest where he is most original. But our much-decried "modernist" painters, composers, poets, novelists are following the ineluctable compulsion of their calling. Stravinsky may not write as great music as did Beethoven, but he would not be an artist at all if he tried to write like Beethoven. It may be that something like the Ricardian theory of rent applies to art. The great artists of old took up the better lands, and left for the modern artists only the poorer soils—the Wastelands, perhaps? The modern can but try his best to cultivate these poorer lands; he cannot, by any possible revolution or single tax, dispossess the old masters and confiscate their unearned increment.

Mr. Fisher, to judge from his work, holds that history is an art. If, however, he were a great, or even a clear-sighted, artist, he would not be content with the well-established ways of English oratorical history. If it is not fair to reproach him for not being a Gibbon or a Froude, it is certainly fair to reproach him for trying to be a bit too much like earlier

and distinguished English historians. There is something mildly heroic in the individual who deliberately flouts fashion in art and life; we are back again to Queen Mary's hat. But picturesque and courageous though such individuals are, they are not good artists. Just what path ought to be taken by the historian sincerely convinced that history should continue to be an art is a problem for which an adequate answer can hardly be furnished here. Some twenty years ago Lytton Strachey found such a path, subsequently widened into a broad street, and now a bit overcrowded. Perhaps the contemporary historian-artist might borrow from the "stream of consciousness" school of novelists?

There is always the possibility that the historian will henceforth find it more profitable to follow the ways of the scientist rather than the ways of the artist. Self-conscious "scientific" history has been rather blustering and overconfident for so young a discipline. Buckle did the cause a great deal of harm. The "new historians" have not always been tactful propagandists. Historians in general have perhaps exaggerated the omniscience of science, underestimated the necessity for a long apprenticeship in the ways of science. Yet when one has been long exposed to the commonplaces, the rhetoric, the oratorical tricks of a historian like Mr. Fisher, one begins to respect anew the humble compiler of the events of July 14, 1789, the industrious statistician who knows how much bread a shilling bought in 1349. Here, certainly, no Ricardian theory of rent can apply. No great predecessors have partitioned out the country. History as a science—history, if you like, as retrospective sociology—is today a far greater adventure than history as an art. Such history need not be dull, though much of it will undoubtedly have to be confined to monographs not meant to be widely read. Darwin is not dull, not even Lyell, and history will always be understandable for the relatively inexpert in a way that physics, for instance, can never again be understandable for the common man. Mr. A. J. Toynbee—who has many of the artist's gifts, and tricks—has evidently in the first volumes of his *A Study of History* chosen rather the path of the scientist than that of the artist. Set beside Mr. Fisher's volumes, *A Study of History* shines out like a beacon. Mr. Toynbee, like Mr. Fisher, is an English liberal; unlike Mr. Fisher, he has not draped his liberalism in willfully old-fashioned garments.

STUDIES IN SOCIAL FORBEARANCE

Broadus Mitchell

THE ONLY point of any economic scheme, with its supporting social and legal institutions, is to supply human beings—particularly those willing and able to work—with goods and services. These should be sufficient in amount to insure health and happiness, and certain in accrual over the whole period of a lifetime. It is demonstrated that the capitalist system cannot do this for a large section of the working population. We have had appalling proof of this during the depression, and the promise is for poorer performance in the future.

That heavy unemployment is to be a permanent feature of the profits-wages-price mechanism is taken for granted in all of the books* here cited. Their authors, though not quite so fatuous as garage mechanics, are equally committed to tinkering: they review at patient and often dreary length all of the specifics proposed, their exact method of application, and the hoped-for results. The whole business resolves itself into an elaborate avoidance, a persistent covering up. Of course they express doubts. Perhaps Mr. Douglas goes farthest when he says:

> Behind all these attempts to attain security within our present system lies the question as to whether our social and political structure will itself prove secure. It is menaced today by business depressions and by war. If it is not able to prevent these twin scourges from assuming virulent form, it will inevitably be changed and transformed. But in

* *Toward Social Security*, by Eveline M. Burns. New York: Whittlesey House. $2.00. *Social Security in the United States*, by Paul H. Douglas. New York: Whittlesey House. $3.00. *Insurance or Dole?*, by E. Wight Bakke. New Haven: Yale University Press. $2.50.

the intervening period, life is likely to be extraordinarily insecure. The real struggle for security may therefore be carried through upon a larger stage than that which has been sketched in this book.

Mrs. Burns, discussing in eleven pages "The Way to Social Security," considers that the most that is called for is resolute amendment of the Social Security Act. "The major shortcomings of the Act," she says, "can never be remedied until we have the courage to abandon the naïve but seductive illusion that economic and social evils can be corrected without pain. We must ask ourselves how far we are prepared to sacrifice some measure of flexibility and adaptability in the economic order. Unless we are willing to pay this price, it is inconsistent to urge more adequate benefits or unemployment compensation . . ."

Mr. Bakke, who has drawn not a little from actually living with the unemployed in Britain, admits that "In the end . . . the societal interest of millions will assert itself as it always has. That interest is to maintain personal stability and security and social status and social organization through useful work. If industry organized for private profit can best serve that interest it will survive. It will not serve that interest by offering a part of the people work and the growing part of the people dole-supported idleness." Apparently, the alternative in his mind is "an economy within an economy," or government sponsored production units for turning out goods which the unemployed need for their own use.

I believe I have quoted their most qualmish declarations, and it required some searching to find these. My complaint is that here are practised authorities, who have studied and spoken and written on the subject for years, and two of whom at least have participated in the drafting of legislation, and they nowhere tell us what chance there is of achieving social security under the capitalist system. They are to be convicted either of lack of acquaintance or of lack of candor, and it is impossible to accuse them of the former. It is so easy for authors to escape social analysis by going into the intricacies of an Act—more intricate often than the problems of a planned economy at which they take only side glances. These books represent the "busy work" of economists. Considering the deep-seated nature of unemployment, and its fearful incidence, these commentators are just pretending to be employed. It is the kind of fooling around

which all of us indulge in when we want to find any excuse to avoid attack upon a necessary but for some reason disagreeable undertaking.

In these volumes the benefit of nearly every doubt is handed over to the established order. Over and over again the question arises in the reader's mind: "Just who are the people, what are the interests, to be served by keeping things essentially as they are by grace of a scheme for charging off social losses?" Here is a beautiful instance of the accuracy of the doctrine of the class struggle; supposedly objective students have their thoughts and judgments suffused with an instinct to protect the owners of the instruments of production. And these, I repeat, are among the best of their group.

Mrs. Burns recognizes that the Social Security Act "is a very unpromising first step in the provision of security against unemployment," and she goes industriously to work, as do Mr. Douglas and Mr. Bakke, to devise and urge alterations in this particular and in that. Mr. Bakke makes some sensible suggestions drawn from British experience. Mrs. Burns puts much faith in piecemeal betterment of the Act:

> It is unreasonable to expect to solve the whole problem of insecurity at a single blow. Even the countries more experienced in dealing with these problems have found it necessary to build up their systems slowly, improving and correcting them year by year. For many years to come (the Supreme Court willing) the Social Security Act must be the base from which amending and improving operations are conducted.

What has been the result in Britain? Mr. Bakke can do no better than assert that unemployment insurance there can be continued even when many who cannot be provided for by the insurance method have to be supported on the dole. The German unemployment insurance scheme proved utterly incapable of coping with the problem. Can the prescription of constant, circumspect amendment of the Act take comfort from the history of the Federal Reserve System? After two decades of adjustment, with a relatively small administrative personnel, with few questions of constitutionality looming, and dealing with forces certainly no more obstinate and critical than those of social security, the Federal Reserve brought up in the closing of every bank in the United States.

These authors dab their eyes every few pages on account of the plight of the involuntarily idle poor, but do not have their indignation especially disturbed by the pleasures of the voluntarily idle rich. They all have an exaggerated notion of the difficulties to be encountered in altering or disregarding accepted social institutions. Says Mrs. Burns: "Our economic order rests upon private property. It is of the essence of private property that what a man owns cannot be taken away from him by force." The government must proceed slowly. But I seem to remember that this same federal government discovered few inhibitions when it demanded that all gold and gold certificates in private ownership and possession be handed over to the Treasury to be paid for in paper of frankly less value, and because the paper was less valuable. Further, who would have supposed, in the days of Coolidge prosperity, that in a few years a national Administration would point to a "Social Security Act" as one of its chief claims to reëlection? We have seen a Weimar Constitution overwhelmed, and Kerensky government swept aside. The likelihood is, even in wealthy and resourceful America, that the forces making for mass unemployment and hence an unthinkable burden upon those permitted to work, will prove too inexorable to be mitigated, much less managed, by such well-laid schemes as the Social Security Act. It is an attempt "to purify the well by painting the pump." It sedulously treats symptoms, not causes. One of the first casualties of the next depression will be the social insurance law.

Mr. Bakke's book is the most thoughtful of these three. He rarely engages in recital of legislative requirements for the sake of the recital; he constantly interprets, judges, projects. It is too good a book to be as bad as it is—too quick in its human sympathies, too tolerant of changes to be so cautious in the end. It is not too much to say that the reader will learn more about American prospects for social security through insurance legislation by reading Mr. Bakke's account of British experience than by marching through the stipulations of the American Act or by following its legislative history. The author realizes, with Sir William Beveridge, that in Britain the process has been a "development from insurance by contract to relief by status," and that instead of referring, as once, to "insurance popularly miscalled the dole," it is proper now to speak of "the dole officially miscalled insurance."

POETS AND LAUREATES

Cleanth Brooks, Jr.

MR. MASEFIELD'S latest volume, *A Letter from Pontus,* represents a rather haphazard collection. In addition to the title poem (an imagined letter from Ovid in exile), it contains ballads on historical figures like Drake and Dick Whittington, an account of a motor trip from Edinburgh to Oxford, an anecdote about a steamship which managed to improvise sail when the machinery broke down, descriptions of the English countryside, and other pieces. It is of interest only in so far as one is interested in the state of public taste or in publishers' folkways. One would have to go back to eighteenth-century figures like Pye and Whitehead and Cibber to find an English laureate whose verse is quite as bad as that represented in this volume.

One need not blame the badness on the laureateship, however. The trouble is a chronic one, and one which can be traced back to the opening of Mr. Masefield's poetic career. At its very opening he won prominence by his lack of respect for Victorian conventions. A little examination of

A Letter from Pontus, by John Masefield. New York: Macmillan. $2.00. *In Tract of Time,* by Helen Cornelius. New York: Oxford University Press. $2.00. *Sonnets from a Hospital,* by Pauline Avery Crawford. Boston: Bruce, Humphries. $2.00. *Poems,* by Michael Roberts. London: Jonathan Cape. 5s. *Adam & Eve & the City,* by William Carlos Williams. New York: Alcestis Press. $5.00. *(limited edition). Three Examples of Love Poetry,* by Parker Tyler. New York: Parnassus Press. *(limited edition).*

the earlier poems ("The Widow in the Bye Street," "The Daffodil Fields," etc.) will show, however, that he did not violate all the conventions or violate them on principle or consistently; and it will show that in spite of the violations, his sensibility was thoroughly Victorian. These haphazard violations were then more in the nature of derelictions from, rather than alterations of, the older conventions—mere lapses, backslidings, purely negative in character.

Now the eighteenth-century laureates by contrast had form, even if the form was cut-and-dried and thoroughly conventional. Indeed the conventions at the worst served the function of a corset: they kept the poet from collapsing into the formlessness of a jellyfish. The present laureate lacks such a corset.

This formlessness is one aspect of Mr. Masefield's complete incapacity for self-criticism. The incapacity is absolute, as one or two examples will demonstrate.

In "A Ballad of Sir Francis Drake," Drake's fiancée, having waited for seven years with no word from her lover, believes that he is dead, and she is about to wed a nobleman. The bridal party is in the church.

> Not one of all within the church
> Thought of Sir Francis Drake.
> A crash made the transept columns lurch
> And the central tower quake.
>
> A cannon-ball came thundering by
> Between [*sic*] the bride and groom.
> The girl said, "Francis wonders why
> There's someone in his room."

The coy understatement is almost as breathtaking as the confidence which Drake evidently reposed in his gunner's marksmanship. But Masefield blunders on, and in the inanity of the final stanza the last traces of the poet's naïve heroics dissolve into utter bathos:

> The noble said with courtly grace,
> "It would be a wiser plan
> If I let Sir Francis take my place,
> And I will be Best Man."

The title poem will furnish another painful and typical instance of Masefield's penchant for the abysmal let-down. Ovid's friend, hearing that Ovid has been implicated in the conspiracy, is speaking:

> The Lady Julia is in arrest,
> With young Silanus, said to be her lover.
> A dozen others are in jeopardy,
> For plotting for the mad Agrippa boy;
> The rumour is, that you are in it, too.
> For God's sake, brother, say it isn't true.

With Helen Cornelius' *In Tract of Time,* we turn from sogginess to hard brilliance of surface. The themes are conventional, but the phrasing is sharp and modern. The modernity of the phrasing is essentially superficial, however; it does not extend to the thinking and feeling about the themes. It is, at its worst, the idiom of a coterie—the coterie, to be exact, of poets like Elinor Wylie and Edna St. Vincent Millay. That it is the idiom of a coterie can be demonstrated, for example, by the number of *clichés* which occur: "The feel of *luminous* death," "*Luminous* flesh burning on bone," "Where rides within its *luminous* sphere," etc. The stereotypes are not those of the Victorians; they are modern and in many cases personal. Wherein do they differ from *symbols* such as Yeats uses in *The Winding Stair?* In answering this question we are back to the distinction between superficial phrasing and phrasing which reflects a quality of the feeling and thought about the basic theme. By an act of the imagination death may be conceived of as luminous; so also may the flesh. But in this volume the reader is not compelled to take the adjective so seriously. The image has no connections; it operates on the surface exclusively.

This defect produces in the reader a sense of dangerous facility, and it also results in a blurring out of the images themselves, just as it often does in the case of Elinor Wylie's poetry—we cannot assimilate so many unrelated images, even if they are sharp-edged and are obviously meant to demand attention.

The kinship between this poet and Miss Wylie is worth emphasizing. Perhaps it is this which has emboldened the publishers to state on the jacket: "A phrase out of seventeenth-century idiom, the title itself is the-

matic of a considerable portion of its [the volume's] contents . . . she offers firmly wrought metaphysical poetry, in that section called 'The Multiplex Image.' " But of course Miss Cornelius is no more a metaphysical poet than is Miss Wylie. Her kinship to the metaphysicals consists in seventeenth-century phrases, the hard quality of the imagery (prism, spirit's grain, cave-hid coral, cloudy crystal, skeleton of fire, etc.) and in the frequently used framework of argument or reasoning. It extends hardly farther than this. The important thing is that the reasoning in these poems, as in those of Elinor Wylie, is not done through the images. The reasoning is merely the string on which the bright hard images are strung. For example:

> The hollow of the hand contains
> The cloudy crystal of all Time;
> This hand that could inscribe a faith
> To make leviathan sublime,
> . . . . . .
> Now, sinuous tendon builds on bone
> The contrapuntal fugue of motion
> To thrust cathedrals towards the sky,
> Or drive a ship across the ocean.

It is because the reasoning is not done sufficiently through the images that the last lines of this poem (and of many poems by Miss Cornelius and Miss Wylie) do not escape the tone of platitude. In fairness to Miss Cornelius, it should be said that at her best she is quite as good as Miss Wylie at her best. But she is not a metaphysical poet, and it is a pity to obscure the meaning of the discovery of the metaphysical school by vulgarizing the term into nonsense. And though we have a right to commend Miss Cornelius for a craftsmanship which is firm and competent, at the same time we must not forget that it is a craftsmanship which is ultimately superficial. It is an accomplishment which the eighteenth century would have appreciated and commended more than the twentieth century ought to be willing to.

Another testimony to the general technical competence to be found in our age (though of course on a much lower level) is the volume, *Sonnets from a Hospital.* The book is a highly personal one as the modest preface indicates, and perhaps it should not be reviewed in this group of volumes

at all. (The level of the poetry is higher than that in Masefield's collection, however.) Miss Crawford's book has fewer lapses into sentimentality than one would expect, and though the author is much more conservative in verse form and diction than is Miss Cornelius, there are indications of modernism too. A few years ago the tone in such a volume as this would probably have been set by the Victorians. We are farther into the twentieth century than we sometimes think. Modernity itself, of a sort, can, and has, hardened into conventions.

To restate this truism is to make an examination of the work of a poet like Michael Roberts more interesting. For I suppose our primary interest in any young poet is to see how successfully he escapes a merely superficial modernism.

Michael Roberts' *Poems,* though it reveals some echoes and influences of other poets, represents a definite achievement. It places him—to set him in some relation to the new English poets—clearly above Spender, who has been greatly overrated, and, I believe, above Day Lewis. He has managed to develop symbols and establish relationships among them; and he has succeeded in setting and sustaining a tone in poem after poem; he has managed to reduce a great deal of heterogeneous experience to some order, and yet he has shown that he respects the concreteness of this experience too much to reduce it to abstraction. At the same time, the critic is likely to leave this volume with some sense of dissatisfaction. And in examining his dissatisfaction, he must come to examine the controlling principle which orders Roberts' poetry.

What is it that relates the items of experience which fill the volume —the Lyddite and the pulse of spring, the summer fête, the old lady who reads Proust, the swung derrick, and the shuddering of the brakes? And on what principle are these disparate items played off against each other? Obviously, it is through these associations and juxtapositions that the poet attempts to unite the various elements of his world—the past with the present, science with mountain scenery, the stability of the earth with the instability of the social order. In separate passages he does manage to fuse them admirably:

> Listen, it is far easier,
> far simpler than the books confess

the swing to the distant ledge,
the act, the acidic, right decision:

There is no halt, there is no resting place,
there is no danger
there is no doubt, no darkness,
save in the narrow room.

But in the larger aspects of this poet's work, the interests seem sometimes confused. The syntheses are achieved therefore only at a price which involves, if not the destruction of the poem, at least severe limitations. For example, one may believe that the revolution is inevitable, but if his imagination is continually caught up with the littleness of the finite measured against the infinite, the revolution, as a finite happening, is apt to suffer. The contemplation of the peak ("the icy rock, the frozen truth") is continually offering too easy an emotional solution to the problem. Viewed from the peak,

Printed on shimmering air or burning frost,
Time is a simple map—

time, including the Marxist interpretation of history. This may account for some of the dissatisfaction which the more militant Marxist poets feel at Roberts' work: it is not calculated to get a revolution going.

To take another example, consider "In Time of Peace." The welter of instances of turmoil—many of them convincing and powerful images—admirably "prove" the conclusion, "The times are normal." But they prove it all too well. The generalization is too obvious, too *coarse*. And in general the sensibility which underlies these poems seems to be a *coarse* sensibility; that is, it seems to be able to make imaginative syntheses on only the most general of levels. Poets like Yeats have taught us to expect a finer organization.

The impersonality of the poems seems related to this "coarseness." It is significant that those few poems in which the poet uses the first person are the weakest in the book. (This is true in general of Auden and Spender also, and the fact that it condemns most of Spender does not make it less true.) A stronger and more vigorous core of reference, a more consistent

personal focus is, it seems to me, necessary in even a "leftish" poet. Such a focus would reduce the heterogeneity to a tighter and more significant order. The danger in much of the newest poetry (though Mr. Roberts usually escapes it) is that the poet will be mastered by, instead of mastering, his show of incongruous detail—that he will employ it for "easy" satiric effect or use it for a merely Whitmanesque elaboration of heterogeneity. But a reflection of the chaos of the modern world is too easy to achieve. We want chaos subdued. The Victorians, of course, secured their unity too easily and therefore, we feel, illegitimately. We demand that the material shall be rawer and more recalcitrant, that it shall resist somewhat and be *formed* only with difficulty. But we want ultimately what the Victorians wanted—form, not confusion. Mr. Roberts has refused to repose too easily in a merely Marxian interpretation as the "meaning" of the experience with which he deals; but he has yet to achieve a rich and brilliant synthesis.

Dr. Williams does not impose a form on chaos so much as furnish us a springboard from which to dive into chaos. Most of the short poems in his most recent volume are too thin. In saying this, we are not criticizing the performance but the intention of this poet. Dr. Williams performs what he sets out to perform. The question is properly: does he set out to perform enough?

I think not. A poem need not have a message, and insists on a message at its peril. The poet should use suggestion, and can hardly insist on it too much. A poet must remain close to concrete perception. These are fundamentals, and Dr. Williams' poetry is based upon them. There can be no criticism here. The situation involved here may be stated as follows: the poet supplies a number of concrete items so selected and arranged as to produce in the intelligent and sensitive reader the poet's experience. This experience is not too heavily controlled by the poet; he quite properly depends upon his reader's imagination, and thus wins a largeness and richness for the poem. The clues with which he supplies the reader are suggestive and not prescriptive—are clues, not blueprints. The brilliant artist may reduce the clues to a very small number, but there is always (though it will vary from reader to reader), a point below which the number of clues cannot be reduced. Dr. Williams, in my opinion, continually hovers just below this point.

The following poem will furnish an example:

YOUNG WOMAN AT A WINDOW

She sits with
tears on

her cheek
her cheek on

her hand
the child

in her lap
his nose

pressed
to the glass

The invitation to the reader contained here is not an invitation to reconstruct a particular poem; it is hardly more than a suggestion which the reader might develop into any of a thousand poems.

Any one must admire the cleanness and sharpness of Dr. Williams' perceptions. But poetry is not painting. To look for something more than perception is not impertinent, therefore, and "Adam," "Eve," and "The City," the title poems of this volume, are the most satisfactory poems in the collection because they have most *complication.*

There is a great deal of complication in Parker Tyler's *Three Examples of Love Poetry.* (This volume, like Dr. Williams' is issued in a handsome, limited edition.) The perceptions here also are sharp and vivid; the juxtapositions are violent, the transitions abrupt. The three examples are frankly attempts to deal with a value in an age which is notorious for its dislocation of values. The second poem, "Poem Clause," seems to me by far the most successful of the three, perhaps because it attempts to go least far in commentary. There is power here, but I feel power not altogether under control; and the dislocation of form, it seems to me, is not merely a device of the poet's in his attempt to renew or create a form. It is in part a testimony to the poet's failure to reduce his experience to form.

FICTION HARVEST

John Crowe Ransom

AND FIRST, a personal note concerning reviewer's procedure. I have read all these books,* but it is impossible to review so many decently in the assigned space. I have elected to review those that interested me most; those that I found myself annotating for the sake of further reference and discussion. There is a possibility that these are the most deserving books in some more public sense, though I have figured no necessity that this should be so. But, I suppose a reviewer, like any other writer, is well advised in honoring his own literary interest, for that will probably be the index to the fields in which he is most competent to speak. I shall remark on eleven of these twenty-four books, taking them in the alphabetical order of their authors' names.

* Novels received are as follows. From Macmillan, New York: *Take All to Nebraska,* by Sophius Keith Winther, $2.50; *Freedom, Farewell!,* by Phyllis Bentley, $2.50; *Gone With the Wind,* by Margaret Mitchell, $3.00; *South Riding,* by Winifred Holtby, $2.50; *Sparkenbroke,* by Charles Morgan, $2.75; *Black Thunder,* by Arna Bontemps, $2.50. From Random House, New York: *Days of Wrath,* by André Malraux, translated by Haakon M. Chevalier, $1.75. From Caxton Printers, Ltd., Caldwell, Idaho: *Angels on the Bough,* by S. M. Steward, $2.50; *Strange Harvest,* by Mildred Burcham Hart, $2.50. From Dutton, New York: *The Featherleys,* by Virginia Watson, $2.50; *Clansmen,* by Ethel Boileau, $2.50; *Odd John,* by Olaf Stapleton, $2.00. From Morrow, New York: *Like the Phoenix,* by Anthony Bertram, $2.50. From Little Brown, Boston: *Salka Valka,* by Halldor Laxness, $2.50; *Third Act*

Brown: *Daughters of Albion.* Mr. Alec Brown, one of the important writers attaching themselves to the English proletariat, is probably gifted with as easy and fluent a narrative discourse as a rather pedestrian novelist can be, and also with a sense of humor, yet he has willfully put together a most disagreeable book. Why? For the coming of the kingdom of righteousness. The germ of his theme is found in a passage from the *Communist Manifesto,* which he himself quotes in an author's epilogue:

> On what foundations is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement . . . in public prostitution.

Extending this idea, Mr. Brown wonders if the married bourgeoises are not tainted as well as their scapegoats the public prostitutes, and writes this book to show that they are. Focusing his attention on them one at a time but stringing them cleverly into a single narrative, he gives the histories of six marital or near-marital affairs, the protagonists being Mr. and Mrs. Roger Etcham and their five daughters Charlotte, Cynthia, Irene, Muriel, and Mary, with respective mates. It is a thorough piece of scavenging. Only Mary is saved, and that because to her comes a lover who is of the elect, therefore handsomer, richer, and more potent than the bourgeois lovers, but who unfortunately, for so stupid is bourgeois society, though it makes no great difference with him, is married already to an unbeliever from whom it is doubtful if he can manage a divorce. Separately, any one of these histories except Irene's makes sense, for it does not matter with what intention Mr. Brown initiates a story, it really becomes a story in his hands. But

in Venice, by Sylvia Thompson, $2.50; *Drums Along the Mohawk,* by Walter D. Edmonds, $2.50. From Doubleday Doran, New York: *Sanfelice,* by Vincent Sheean, $2.50; *Daughters of Albion,* by Alec Brown, $2.75. From Bobbs Merrill, Indianapolis: *The Long Night,* by Andrew Lytle, $2.50. From Harper, New York: *Eyeless in Gaza,* by Aldous Huxley, $2.50. From Viking Press, New York: *The Thinking Reed,* by Rebecca West, $2.50. From Harcourt Brace, New York: *Strange Glory,* by L. H. Myers, $2.00. From Longmans Green, New York: *Darkness and Dawn,* by Alexei Tolstoi, translated by Edith Bone and Emile Burns, $2.50. From Farrar and Rinehart, New York: *In the Deep South,* by James Saxon Childers, $2.50.

the moral does not bear so much repetition, even though the pattern is ingeniously varied. Before we have finished the effect has begun to feel comic.

Childers: *In the Deep South*. Mr. Childers writes well in several narrative styles, but his book does not have the substance and depth we expect of a novel. I think it is because he realizes his subject only intellectually and morally, not with his sensibility. It has to do with the friendship between a young white Southerner, of some station socially, and a cultivated colored man. The colored man visits at the white one's house, plays the piano, is conversed with and addressed as "Mr. Parker" by the sister, until the white community intervenes brutally and puts a stop to it. There are no casualties except the sister, whose banker fiancé gives her up for her foolishness and drives her to suicide. Mr. Childers has a delicate subject here, in a strictly aesthetic sense. Yet in a book where other mind-states are pretty thoroughly exploited there seems to be no probing, and for that matter no particular awareness, of the kind of shock and adjustment, the alternation of ethical consent and deeply conditioned physical repulsion, by which any of the principals would probably respond to these interracial adventures. They are exhibited otherwise as sensitive principals, except the colored man, who is little more than an abstract symbol for the author's purpose. The full compass of their emotions might have given a big theme to some veteran psychological novelist, a brisk Gaul perhaps, inhibited by no racial ideology of his own. I think that Mr. Childers does not quite assume the responsibility of a novelist. He is too innocent.

Huxley: *Eyeless in Gaza*. Mr. Huxley's progress as a novelist has been aesthetically a retrogression. In his work at first there were almost comic effects, of the sort now given up to Mr. P. G. Wodehouse, but it steadily became more serious, until it was completely satirical and harsh. In this big new novel he is not aesthetic but prophetic and sternly intellectual. The characters are not persons so much as they are competing moral principles and techniques. He writes with great abandon for an earnest thinker, his quickness comparing favorably with the dullness of Mr. H. G. Wells, for example, who also writes novels which are little more than illuminated scientific and philosophical commentaries. This book is an education both in the substance of modern ideas and in the dialectic of exchanging them

over cocktails. It is impossible for Mr. Huxley to be a true novelist for being a biologist, sociologist, psychologist; for being a Huxley. And first, said Mr. Huxley in planning this novel, the data of the decadence, in order to exhibit the need to which our constructive life-pattern shall be directed. The data are lurid. The characters are schooled in arts as well as sciences but their wills are uneducated; they are without permanent motives, satiated with unsystematic experience, wretched, lost. Two-thirds of the book presents this sort of evidence, though hint of the solution is introduced about half way. Anthony, a prig of a man, out of Oxford, probably out of Balliol College, is finally brought to his senses by a little incident worthy of his author's famous devastating touch. He and his girl—Helen, who might have become a noble character if he could have loved, respected, married, and educated her—are lying naked on the house top when an aeroplane passes overhead and drops a dog, which falls right beside them and spatters their bodies with blood. Immediately Anthony goes to join a South American revolution, and in the wilds he encounters a Doctor Miller, who has acquired the secret of living. At the end of the book he is back in England making steady progress in conditioning his spirit and his body to unity under Dr. Miller's regimen and, to make himself useful, addressing public audiences for the pacifist organization. The novel is principally the locus of many provocative ideas, and I will venture to remark on Dr. Miller's stock of them. His system is admirable. It involves vegetarianism; physical exercises which teach right use, and inhibition of bad muscular use; mental discipline which inhibits the private ego and teaches the sense of unity with all mankind and with the universe. Here I am recalled to the words of another Huxley that I read once to this effect: Every species of life has its revolutionary destiny against which the fate of the individual is unimportant, but it is the unique duty of man, the highest species, to discover and "consciously hasten" his own evolution. I was sceptical about that duty, it did not feel compulsive, but cruel. I rather like Dr. Miller's ideal, which is not so transcendental. The last page of the book is a lyric projection about peace, the peace which sometimes bathes the mind, and I feel that I am for peace rather than for continuous strife. But I suggest that in these days when religion has failed the most of us the peace that passes understanding comes most easily where Dr. Miller has not thought of looking for it: in innocent aesthetic experience, and in

the arts. If Mr. Huxley had it he would be able to write sometimes a whole charming little unit of prose, which now for all his brilliance he never does, because he is possessed and irritated by the practical will, which he has never learned to lay aside. I suggest Schopenhauer to Mr. Huxley. Introduced into Dr. Miller's thought, the pursuit of the arts might vitalize a regimen which is much too inhibitory, or negative, and which on its positive side is only a system of calisthenics. It is monastic in an age when the visible monasteries have gone out of business, which means that it is impracticable. Art is an interest which is always positive, and creative rather than destructive. I also suggest *Samson Agonistes* to Mr. Huxley, with the idea that he cannot have read it recently or he would know that his hero is not a Samson, has had no such history, and stands eyeless but not in Gaza.

Lytle: *The Long Night.* This is an original and amazing book. I believe there are technical blunders in it. There is also a limitation upon the author's interest, which in the course of later works may well prove to be constitutional and therefore irremediable; but a pleasanter way of saying the same thing is that by a certain individual bias this novelist is specialized and defined. There is no doubt about the extraordinary gift for the narrative form as shown in this first novel. He sees life sharply under its specific images, as word, action, gesture, and physiognomy. Preferably the images are heroic and picturesque: that is his limitation and his difference.

This author is not infected by decadence, by the progressive paralysis of will which has attacked the moderns, but the turn of his fiction is, on the contrary, epical. It is also almost wholly masculine, to complete its symbolization of the will. The story emerges from a very special occasion, the Alabama of the late 'fifties and the Civil War and Reconstruction, but then the will is always local and contingent in its metaphysic, and the author does not depend upon his particular occasion as being any better than another. The hero is a Confederate soldier and the author is a Southerner, but it would have been the same story if both had been Yankees, for the author is not concerned with abstract or statistical issues but only with the requirement that the hero shall have a becoming fury and a gift for partisanship. The theme is that of the play about Hamlet, but not exactly the Shakespearian one; something between that story and the rude presumptive *Hamlet* on which it was based. Pleasant McIvor, a boy, worships

his father, a patriarchal planter. The father gets into a feud with the speculators—the then racketeers, stealers of slaves and horses—and is brutally slain by a company of them numbering, I should think, about twenty-five. The boy follows them and prints upon the tablets of his memory their faces and their horses. The family, a strong Scotch-Irish set, gather and discuss the vengeance, but it is too difficult, and the boy himself undertakes it, almost single-handed. He has the illusion of being directed by his dead father; this feature is part of the convention but its use here is infrequent and, I think, gratuitous. He proceeds by a cunning almost more than human to kill his enemies, one at a time, always in the night. The story in these terms would offer a simple and somewhat barbarous reading, but it is not the actual story at all. There are two complications. The author does what is Shakespearian enough, he turns, and shows us the villains about their private and domestic lives, and they are not thorough villains any more. Mr. Lytle's relish of life is extreme, both in war and in peace. The passages are racy, humorous, and beautiful which show the sheriff's weakness for horses, and the household affairs of the Quintus Harrisons and the Weavers. All the more does Hamlet's revenge therefore horrify the reader, by the author's own act of sympathetic projection. Then comes the second complication. The private enemies get swept off into the Confederate army, and there must Pleasant go too in order to follow them. He keeps on killing them, it is easier than ever for him now, the expert scout and outpost, to pick them off. The battle of Shiloh is fought and General A. S. Johnston is killed, in what I think must be the best thing in fiction by way of a piece of military narrative which is at once aesthetically satisfying and lucid in its logic. It is related to *The Red Badge of Courage,* for instance, as an orchestra is related to a fiddle. And now, inevitably, the public cause begins to dispossess the private one. Finally Pleasant must acknowledge that he has no more heart for the blood-feud. It is characteristic of him that he does not lapse into the mere soldier, a solution unworthy of a Hamlet since the ingenious Shakespeare has laid hands on him. He has suffered a personal defeat and betrayed the father's ghost. He deserts from the army and goes into a remote section to lead his sullen half-life. It must be said that this Hamlet is less human than Shakespeare's, or at least that he resists his humanity longer; we feel estranged against him. Sometimes he becomes almost no more than an

abstract device by which we may be introduced to a large and brilliant acquaintance, of persons and of events. To the technique of presentation I would certainly demur at one point, and violently, in justice to the literary creation which it blemishes. There is a prefatory letter at the front of the book addressed to the proprietary teller of the oral tale from which Lytle professes to have built his story; this may be generous, but it would be better left to secure and notoriously technical writers, like the later Henry James, to explain to very special audiences their occasions and experiments; it grossly impairs the innocent reader's consent to artistic illusion. Worse than the letter, there is a fictional envelope around the story, offering a second and official account of its origin. Here the party of the first person is called to meet an unknown uncle, whose name is Pleasant McIvor, an aged man, who tells him his story because it must be preserved in the family history. The nephew would give it in his uncle's words, and begins it in the first person from Pleasant's point of view, but quickly recovers from that error and begins to tell it from the same point of view in the third person. When that proves irksome too, he calmly forgets the circumstances in which the narration started, he assumes such variety in points of view as he requires till his destinate tale is finished. The envelope is not only impossible, it is undesirable. It takes us back to the concept of those now-ancient writers, Defoe, Fielding, Scott, Hawthorne, who appeared to think that a fiction would not be accepted unless it could fool readers into mistaking it for history. It is significant that the early parts, in Pleasant's homely diction, do not achieve great distinction of dignity or delicacy. The character telling the story is not of the author's mental stature. He is cramping the author's style, he is a deadly incubus, but the author restores him to the ranks, and allows his own proper genius to bloom.

Malraux: *Days of Wrath.* André Malraux in an admirably compact little job relates the imprisonment and deliverance of a Communist in Nazi Germany. The hero is arrested on the charge of being Kassner, a plotter against the government, and indeed he is Kassner, but has in his possession forged papers to show that he is somebody else. A tentative period of solitary confinement is interrupted only by savage beatings while the officials try to make up their minds. To his surprise he is set free, and discovers that he owes it to a fellow-prisoner who has taken the name of Kassner upon him-

self in order to die in his stead. Such is the brotherly love of comrades. The writing is firm and of Gallic economy. The decoration comes in the passages where Kassner, to escape lunacy and suicide, remembers music—Russian songs, Bach, Beethoven. He knows his music, but since the musical scores themselves would not produce a literary effect the author permits him to programmize them into spatial images, which form a broken and somewhat purple reverie. (One must not suppose that purple satisfactions are exclusively for the bourgeoisie.) The book does not have a very great distinction; behind the always artful technique there is no such genius as to justify the adjectives that have been used in praise of this writer. The artistic motive itself is not pure, for the story is as transparently directed as an allegory. Kassner is too good, while the Nazi judge and guards are perfect in villainy. The judge is made to persecute Kassner by saying, "And who is sleeping with your wife now?" and the guards are sadists. But it is possible that such persons are exceptional among Nazis, and also that Kassner is exceptional among Communists. It is obliged to occur to the critic, if he is not of either faith, that malice as well as love has gone into this book. He will be too well aware that good comrades before now have been caught hating and misrepresenting their enemies in fits of plain bourgeois rage. Inevitably the discussion of the novel, which will rate high in leftist literature of the moment, will turn on the point of doctrine; will argue, for example, in the terms advanced by Waldo Frank in his introductory essay. All but the infatuated will find it slightly ironical for Communists, representing love, to complain of military persecution under Fascists, who represent hate, when they remember the recent domestic history of Russia under the banner of love. Mr. Frank finds that modern literature, from Goethe onwards, deals when it is significant with the nauseous disintegration of the Faustian or individualistic man. But Fascism cannot easily, except by a very sophisticated dialectic, be made to stand for individualism; it stands for the abdication of the individual in the name of the nation, just as Communism stands for nationalism too, which is its practicable side, and also for internationalism if that ever proves possible. The nauseous disintegration of modern man may be felt, and even statistically represented, but his imprisonment under either of these *-isms* is not medicine exactly, but surgery. When brotherly love is organized into empire its ethical marks are indistinguishable from hatred.

As to that I would cite the novel of Mr. Huxley, who has looked to the left even more closely than he has looked to the right. His hero comes to the conclusion that Communism is organized hatred, but confesses that there is a very large class of devotees who, through a technique well known and possessed by idealists of every complexion, manage to wrap it under their own nobler ideology. (The reference is to page 461.)

Mitchell: *Gone with the Wind*. This is a remarkable first novel. It has narrative invention, pleasant and syntactical writing, and enormous proportions which do not hinder it from being a unit and a book. My admiration for the architectural persistence behind this big work is extreme. The effect is grandiose. Minuter inspection discloses not too much acquaintance with the technical resources of modern fiction, but the author plugs along till she has accomplished her design. It is a historical novel that has hit upon a new and gorgeous setting: the young, pushing Atlanta, of before, during, and after the Civil War. The point of view is intensely and sometimes a little painfully Southern. Sherman's army burned Atlanta. Then, while it was rebuilding, the carpetbaggers, black Republicans, and scalawags were in control, and it was heroic if the old-style Southerners held out. The partisanship of the author is carefully documented as a rule, the exception being that it is always weak on the precise political act which Southern people denote when they say Reconstruction, or Republicanism. For instance:

> Bonds were issued running into the millions. Most of them were illegal and fraudulent but they were issued just the same. The state treasurer, a Republican but an honest man, protested against the illegal issues and refused to sign them, but he and others who sought to check the abuses could do nothing against the tide that was running.

So wide a generalization is startling in a book which admits to no exigencies of space and as a rule is conscientiously specific. But I can imagine this answer being made, that the principal point of view is Scarlett's, and Scarlett is a woman, and so is her author, who may therefore feel relieved of the responsibility of understanding what would have been the instant and urgent interest of a man. In fact it seems to me that this is not a man's book at all. Neither were Jane Austen's books, but Jane understood the motivation of her men, while Miss Mitchell fails with hers rather uniformly. With

her women she is more successful, but here an odd reservation must be made: close up, with the working of their minds exposed for us, her women become indistinct, though when viewed from a distance they define themselves sharply. I think this is because Miss Mitchell has been ill advised in employing the subjective method, as she does regularly with Scarlett. Her intuitions are keen, but her explicit psychological introspections are elementary and wooden. We feel that Scarlett was not really stupid, but Miss Mitchell enforces her upon us frequently in that light by reading her mind. Melanie, the alternative heroine, is much the finest characterization in the book, yet it is my impression that her processes are never described. Melanie is the paragon of Southern ladies, and it is a great tribute to her and to her author to say that she never becomes even slightly ridiculous. But I wish Miss Mitchell had given us more of the conversational brilliance which, she intimates, went on in the gatherings of the old Southerners, among the men, in the mixed companies, and perhaps even among the women. Scarlett never attended to that. I have sometimes been afraid that there was elegance without brilliance, without wit, in the handsome gatherings of the Southern forebears. If so it was a highly vulnerable combination, and Miss Mitchell does little to relieve my apprehensions. Or was the wit more lacking in old Atlanta than elsewhere? Certainly disillusionment, modern education, the irony of misfit ideals, or whatever cause there may be, has brought now to superior Southerners the defenses of wit, of intellectual playfulness, and Miss Mitchell is a modern Southerner and an Atlantan. The trouble is that she deeply committed herself to the mentality of her Scarlett. Or is the wit more lacking in modern Atlanta than elsewhere?

Morgan: *Sparkenbroke*. One cannot but admire a fine narrative facility and a wealth of beauty of no mean quality, even when the plot, under which the one is exerted and the other is achieved, is fantastic beyond reason and cannot but arrive at absurdity. Mr. Morgan in his literary personality may be defined as an eternal adolescent, for he cannot obtain his consent to the limitations of adult experience, which betray too cruelly the romantic expectations of youth. This book is a sufficiently frank examination, in the persons of very handsome protagonists, of the mystical but illusory promise of sex. Philosophers before now have looked into this subject but not so explicitly. It is true that Lord Sparkenbroke, seventh viscount and twelfth

baron of the name, looking and acting like the modernization of Lord Byron, never actually has realized in the sexual act the beatitude that intuition tells him should be there. On the other hand, though his affairs have been numerous they have not been exhaustive, they do not yield the universal negative proposition as their inference. Much is hoped from the affair with Mary, wife of the worthy village doctor and daughter-in-law of the excellent parson who has My Lord's living; and this is what the book is about. There are many brilliant episodes but it is painful both to the parties concerned and to the curious reader that, though they stand repeatedly on the threshold of the critical experiment, to the point of lying down naked together, they are always stopped by the weak pious qualms of the one or the other, or else by external interruption. The world can never know, the Sparkenbroke theory must remain in the stage of hypothesis. Of course, Mr. Morgan's book cannot be so ridiculous as the summary of it, a trait which it shares with many poems. I think the reader is likely to feel that the subject is really adapted for a poem, by the late E. A. Robinson for example, and not for a novel, for these two forms need quite different degrees of verisimilitude. But Mr. Morgan somewhat improves the dignity of his hero's position by associating with his practice of love his practice of death; that is as irrational as the other but it cannot be poked fun at so readily. For Sparkenbroke these are alternative experiences with the same meaning. His public reputation is based officially upon his poems about death, and unofficially and perhaps in about equal measure upon his well-known way of using women once and then casting them off forever in disillusion. When a boy of twelve he had an experience in the Mound, which is the family tomb where the Sparkenbrokes put their dead. Imprisoned in the Mound by a mischievous prank, he was found after many hours entranced there, as follows:

> At the farther end of the tomb Piers was standing erect, his body stiff and seemingly propped by the wall, the muscles of his throat taut, his eyes wide. So pale was his face, crowned by his tongued and crested hair, that the light in which he stood appeared to emanate from him, and George was dazzled by what he saw.
>
> Soon the eyelids moved and drooped, the head rocked sickly, the bliss of communication faded.

And when he is denied Mary's love for the last time he goes into the Mound to die willingly, at thirty-six years of age, with his romantic experiment and his poems unfinished. His own defiant verses welcoming death are placed on the tomb, and they lead visitors to think of Sparkenbroke's view of death in these terms:

> . . . as re-entry into a continuous reality from which birth and sensuous existence are a divagation.

One remarks that death is unlike love in being an experiment that Lord Sparkenbroke can only try once. I suppose there is no decent critic in the world who has contemplated the Gothic extravagances in this modern novel without growing ribald, but at the same time without noting how little they are related to its real merits. As to these latter, I should say that Mr. Morgan does his lords and palazzos beautifully, and his country scenes and parson's households, and his dramatic moments—all but the tense and silly ones.

Myers: *Strange Glory*. Mr. L. H. Myers, British author of the highly regarded trilogy, *The Root and the Flower,* writes with very great distinction but combines with Mr. Morgan to form the classification: two novelists in search of a religion. Mr. Myers' quest is spent in a slightly more conventional field of action. His writing is fastidious and economical, incomparably stricter than Mr. Morgan's, yet his emotional effects are disproportionately massive. The narrative pattern would stand out from any array of novels for its concision. A beautiful and sensitive American heiress, quite like Henry James' Isabel Archer, is launched into European society, which is corrupt, and presently has gone all the gaits and smashed up; she has married an English lord and been divorced for cause. She is not damaged beyond repair, coming out with all her beauty, presumably all her fortune, and certainly a salutary disgust. All this part of the story we only hear about. In the meantime, and continuing after these events, she returns once a year to her native city of Pontchartrain, in the Deep South, and forms the habit of taking a cab once on each visit into the swamp to look at the moss-hung oaks. These, as I happen to think, must be impressive beyond most of the earth's flora; enough to be the pride of a region, so that *The Southern Review,* from Baton Rouge, should present Mr. Myers with a life subscription in return for the homage he has paid; but what is much more important,

impressive enough to be the symbol of something grander than earth. The thing which comes to pass on these little pilgrimages, by the surest and yet most casual-looking and convincing progress, until it has reached a tragic and beautiful ending, is what makes Mr. Myers' story. It involves two men, who are equal influences in restoring her tenderness and integrity. It is to the elder man rather than to the lover that the author has given the religious lead, and it is the trees which are capitalized as the religious symbol. I venture to think that they do not bear the emphasis which they receive. The aesthetic and entirely secular values of the girl's experience are better than those open to the common run of mortals; why strain beyond them? For though there hardly exists in philosophy any definitive statement of the whole implication of aesthetic experience, one imagines that such a statement would reveal in it a unique insight into the world and probably no discovery of a cosmos or a specific deity. At any rate, in the light of the event, I think the author's straining beyond the aesthetic experience is unfortunate and anticlimactic:

> In the silence that followed these words they watched the dark tent of the sky gradually filling with light; the moon was rising clear above the level of the forest; and one by one the hooded forms of the communing trees stood forth in smoky, silvery brightness. Garmented from head to foot in robes of moss, they took shape in Paulina's vision as patriarchal figures brooding on human destiny. Here was a company of Ancients, and she could even imagine among them, Himself, the Ancient of Days.

In the earlier passages the trees have taken shape in Paulina's vision as bearded; here they are garmented. To see them as one or the other is equally a natural and legitimate act of the imagination, and there is hardly any further act really available for the imagination; not in a sound aesthetic at least, and a sound religion cannot build on an unsound aesthetic. It is significant of the weakness of Mr. Myers' position that he finds the moss useful as the garment of deity when it would not do to construe it any longer as the beard. But a religion is a vast and solid institution, not an improvization. Mr. Myers is precisely like Wordsworth in saying, "The world is too much with us." But Wordsworth confined himself for the most part to saying, as

the sequel of his rush out of the world into nature, "I have felt a Presence." He did not identify it with a tree, or even a mountain, though there were distinctly some impressive instances of either in his region. The modern reader may be wholly sympathetic with Mr. Myers' urgency without accepting his strategy. It spoils what would otherwise be a rare perfection.

Tolstoi: *Darkness and Dawn.* This book, describing the revolution in Russia from its original groundswell through the mass outbreak during the World War and down to the Armistice, must be almost as masterly a performance as anything in the tradition of Russian fiction. It has perhaps an even larger breadth of action than anything, not even excepting *War and Peace.* Its author is related in blood both to Leo Tolstoi and to Turgeniev. So far as I am concerned, it answers satisfactorily the question whether literature will have a continuance under Soviet censorship. It shows the bitter effort and comes in sight of the final triumph of the Reds, but its artistic detachment is high above partisanship, in which respect it offers a lesson to the literary attachés of the proletariat farther west. It is unjust to say that it is the story of the revolution; it is strictly the story of several men and women enmeshed in it. The heroine and principal character is in the cause, though not consistently, and her husband is an officer in the Red army. But her sister's husband, just as noble a man, is an officer in the White army, and the course of the campaign is described as much from one point of view as the other. Every respect is paid to the heroic conduct of Denikin's army, in which nearly every private soldier was a former officer at the German front, and many stand for decided liberalization of the old régime. The philosophical issue between the parties is never settled dialectically though there is plenty of talk, as in all Russian novels. The author's feeling, or at least the one which he communicates to the reader, is that the Reds triumph because it is simply Russia's destiny, because the genius of Russia is simple and communal, but only after a struggle so vast and confused that no single participant was able to tell how things were going or why. Structurally, the novel is a masterpiece in the Russian manner, and that makes a fascinating study. There is even less of explanatory remark, less of the visible author as moralist and historian, than in most Russian novels, much less than in *War and Peace.* The materials are words, actions, pictures, and feelings of the simpler sort, thousands upon thousands of them. But how

they march! A Russian novel is a military campaign in which an innumerable multitude of units are clashing without apparent direction, yet slowly assume their significant order. The heroine will manage and unify a fragment of them; she has a husband who will captain another fragment; but she also has a former lover, a sister, a brother-in-law, a father, who will accept commissions, and if it is necessary these know still other persons who will serve. But the atomic simplicity of the units is marvelous, exclusively a Russian phenomenon. Here is a picture out of a love narrative, and love, incidentally, needs no other kind of narrative for Russian novelists than just such successions of simple items:

> The sun warmed her knees, and the wind touched her cheeks and shoulders and neck as if with rounded fingers; the flag flapping at the bow, the sailor sitting on a coil of rope—everything white, everything bathed in sunshine—it all, with herself and Ivan Ilyitch, floated slowly among the clouds, between the low, smooth banks.

Compare it with a fairly analogous scene from Western fiction:

> They were looking across the lake at the dark theatre of pinewoods on the farther shore, which man had hardly marked, and at the superior and dazzling theatre of white peaks, which man had not marked at all. She was not ordinarily an enthusiast of the Swiss landscape, for it seemed to her that if snow mountains were beautiful, then vanilla ices and meringues also must be conceded beauty. But she was exalted by the thin and glittering air; its quality suggested that water might become intoxicating not only when certain substances are added to it, but when others are taken away from it. All recollected climates seemed by comparison stained and cloddish.

This passage is from the novel which will be next under our discussion; its story and its people will differ from those of Tolstoi as much as the quality of this scene from his, and that is a difference as between two worlds. Studying this latter picture we may be inclined to mourn or to rejoice because the serpent has entered Eden, but at any rate we feel that nothing in our world is naïve and fresh, and that there cannot again be simple experience. And probably it is true. If we look for the depths of Russian feeling, again it takes a simple and childlike form:

> He walked on tiptoe past her cabin and to his own, and, when he had thrown himself down on his back in the berth and closed his eyes, he felt that he was shaken to his innermost soul, that he was filled with sounds and odours and the warmth of the sun and with a sharp incomprehensible sadness which pervaded it all.

The sharp but incomprehensible sadness; there is something mystical about it. The Russians are resolute primitives in their kind of fiction, as if they knew the native sources of their strength and had erected a taboo against the analytic practices of their Western brothers. Here is a phrase from the fiction of the West:

> It was impossible to carry on any truly contrapuntal conversation with him, in which theory and practice, or his particular experience and the general experience of all other beings, could be harmonized.

It would be ruinous to insert this into a Russian novel; it is of another mental age. It involves a development of syntax, of dialectical distinction, of that systematic association and dissociation of images which we call thought. Explicit thought, hardly admitted into Russian fiction and thought well of, I imagine, for common Russian life, is probably relegated to the specialists in the sciences to develop its practical benefits. It would seem to follow from all this that Russian fiction is, as all other literatures must at some time have been, in the anonymous stage. It has no author in the sense that it has none of that sense of personality which we receive from a style. And what is style? The mind grows out of its childhood precisely by being inducted into the world of thought and becoming at home there. Simplicities cannot live in this world, where every item must receive its commentary. But still each individual may have his preferred kind of commentary, and there indeed is his individuality, for short of thought all experience is felt, if felt at all, as simply strange and mystical. The individual is a sort of chemist, compounding the simples into substances which, if he has the gift, are both rich and characteristic. The character of his commentary is his style; it is the public witness to his personality. The Russians as yet covet neither this personality nor this style which is its symbol. When fiction, the new and world-wide kind of literary architecture, appeared a century or two ago, it caught the Russian writers in the possession of a set of

basic materials different from our own; it was as if they would have to build with uncut stones, when we had reduced ours to dust and then made with it synthetic brick and concrete of an infinity of colors and textures. But the figure is too disparaging to our novelists. There is more of the spirit's travail behind our Western product, the mark of a longer human appropriation is distinct in it, and its rewards are proportionate. The sighs of envy which we hear exhaling when certain readers look at the Russian novel puts them into a class with those effete persons who have thought they cannot live without ballads and a folk-poetry, though Shakespeare and Milton have already come and gone. After Shakespeare and Milton there cannot be ballads and folk-poetry again. We should not seriously want them.

West: *The Thinking Reed.* I should say that Miss West is much the most accomplished of all these writers, because her book is perfect in a form so rare that hundreds of efforts must fail in order that one may be successful. A novel may want to be many things, but what it must be is a piece of architectural composition. The requirements are so severe that the novelist may come to the comfortable conclusion that he does well enough if he can put the easiest and most available objective materials together. Such cheap comfort is not for Miss West, who disdains the usual staple of objective materials, and cannot use them till she has transformed them by passing them through the furnace (the alembic? or the biological nursing pond? or the dance?) or her imagination. She has sentenced herself to write a fiction with her most personal style, and that is a different thing from writing little sketches with it, or formless meditations, or screeds like Milton's gorgeous ones, or even sermons like Jeremy Taylor's, or, above all, poems. In poetry the style is everything, the architecture may be anything or nothing, and to poetry we shall always have to go in order to find those passages which focus the most of the living personality in an instant. Style is the thing which the Russians have not wanted but which Western writers have developed so lovingly; the symbol of personality which is precious to our battered civilization and worth all its fury and expense. *The Thinking Reed* is Miss West's Portrait of a Lady. By a coincidence the lady is named Isabelle, and her mind, like that of the other heroine, is still virginal though she is a widow when she goes to Europe to seek spiritual adventures, which obviously must come under the head of marital ones. The technique of the story

is regular in the Jamesian sense that it all comes from Isabelle as the special reporter, in the third person, and of course she has precisely the aesthetic endowment of her author, which is nearly the ultimate among current writers. Between James and Miss West the relation is clearly one of succession, though the moral Puritanism which was already receding in the gentleman has had a further relaxation now. Before her second marriage Isabelle has an unhallowed romance with a man who, quite frankly,

> . . . had a hold on her for the simple reason that, when he and she were linked by passion, they formed a pattern which was not only aesthetically pleasing but was approved, and indeed almost enjoined, by everything in civilization that was not priggish.

Priggishness, hypocrisy, unkindness, shabbiness, are the enemies of happiness in Isabelle's world. Quite naturally, its condition is love; only in a great love is there escape from the vicious degeneracy of the wealthy in French and English society. But it would be a small and jealous love which would refuse its votaries participation in any other good thing, and there are many good things which only money can bring. Isabelle wants the fullness of life, and very nearly achieves it. Miss West, her author, is moved but not intimidated by the desperate philosophies fighting in these days for possession of the soul. She authorizes her principals to take what they can get, and what they can get is experience sharpened to aesthetic delight, like the effect of a cause, by, if one may know from what one reads in the newspapers, may be the last splendors of the bourgeois decadence. But I solemnify the tone of her book, which resists the temptation to be shrill and tragic so well that once or twice it is slightly Rabelaisian and nearly comic, and we are concerned for its shining dignity. Taste, the aesthetic attitude, is nourished by what it feeds on, it does not like to run the risk of being more sumptuous than its expectations will justify. To the making of Miss West's style, which is her trained and public personality, all the best writers have probably contributed, except the anarchs like Joyce and Mrs. Woolf. It is as if George Moore came back to life in this passage:

> In the spring he would lay the foundation of his plans for public things and she would have her children, in the summer they would admire to see how their work fared in the heat of the day, in the autumn

there would be harvest, and since the days grow shorter and they would have so much to talk over, no doubt winter also would not hang on their hands.

Henry James is everywhere. And perhaps the shade of poor Frances Newman is in this passage:

> But there was no help for that, since a woman cannot tell a man whom she is about to marry how pleased and amazed she is to find herself daily coming nearer to loving him, though in the circumstances he could not possibly hear better news. This discomfited her by its suggestion that the world in which human beings lived was not the same as the world of which they spoke and thought.

She is more exuberant than James, and much more opulent than Newman.

Winther: *Take All to Nebraska.* This is a tale about the hardships of a Danish family in pioneer Nebraska, but it is not like the stories of Willa Cather. It is told with deep feeling, artlessly as a chronicle. The author is a professor of literature at the University of Washington, so that I suppose it is deliberately, by an error of theory, that here he has sloughed off lettered habits and reverted to the folk-speech. From the account of the train-journey:

> So the children's coats were taken off again. They all wanted something to eat so Meta gave them bread and butter from the basket that had held their food for the last three days. The bread was very dry, but the children did not seem to mind that so much. David, who was the next to the oldest, seemed to get delight from the fact that he could eat the soft part and throw away the crust without being reprimanded by his father. This in itself seemed like a miracle.

It goes on, in simplicity and sincerity, to a happy if modest conclusion. In the language of the book's jacket, "These people are real, and we care what happens to them." What is there wrong then, giving us slightly the feeling of guilt, when we confess to having had a registration of this kind? The trouble is that these people are too real. It is not a novel but a history, or at most the mistaken imitation of a history. One of the first things the artist has to do is to overcome the common confusion between art and history,

art and autobiography, artifice and literal realism. There are few complexes more delicately balanced than that of the mind waiting to participate in an artistic illusion, and the state is correspondingly precarious. It needs every possible encouragement, and there are devices for authors to employ. These would be described for prospective authors in the primer of their technique if only there were a systematic theoretical learning devoted to these things.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE FOLLOWING letters, the Editors believe, will serve as valuable and interesting footnotes to two articles which appeared in the Summer, 1936, issue of *The Southern Review:* "The Pattern of the Unneutral Diplomat," by O. W. Riegel; and "The Greenberg MS and Hart Crane's Poetry," by Philip Horton.

LANSING AND NEUTRALITY

I HAVE READ Mr. Riegel's review of Lansing's book with great interest . . . I agree with a number of conclusions which he draws but not with all. It seems to me that mandatory legislation stating in advance in detail what administrative officials should do irrespective of the world situation or the actions of foreign powers, can lead to nothing but disaster. This method of controlling executive action which may be adequate in domestic policy where all of the people whose actions are involved are subject to the legislation, can never work in foreign policy where the main factor to be considered is the action of foreign powers who are not subject to the legislation.

For this reason it seems to me legislative control must be by way of stating the broad ends of policy during a period of neutrality, leaving the Executive wide discretion to adapt the means towards these ends as the situation develops. Our government is, of course, peculiarly unadapted to assuring continual responsibility of officials, subject to such guidance by broad statements of policy. I think if the Constitution could be interpreted so as to permit continuing questioning of executive officials in Congress, as is done in England and European parliaments, it would be desirable, although, of course, the degree of responsibility assured in Europe would be impossible unless the Executive actually owed its tenure to the support of the majority of the Legislature.

The other point which this review of Lansing's memoirs impresses upon me is the impossibility of a neutrality in time of general war. I think it is inevitable that opinion in a powerful nonbelligerent state will more and more insist upon a positive policy, and a policy of genuine neutrality will always appear to be passive rather than active to the general public. I may note the comment which I made in the pamphlet I published some time ago entitled "The United States and Neutrality" in the Public Policy Pamphlet Series of the University of Chicago Press. On page 5 I note certain newspaper studies of the course of American opinion toward neutrality before the World War, and conclude that American opinions began to think "it was both imprudent and undignified to be passive. We must do something positive about it, and after notes had been sent without results there seemed nothing of a positive nature to do but get into the war." I think this tendency of opinion will be illustrated in any future war of considerable magnitude and thus the only hope I see is not in attempting to keep opinion neutral and passive, but rather boldly to embark upon a program of attacking aggression by coöperation with other powers. If the aggressor can be objectively defined, such a policy would be of constructive value in the world. It would provide a positive focus for the opinion that we should be active, more and more, as the general war continued.

It is unfortunate that the unrealistic notion that neutrality can be maintained by certain trade controls has been promoted by such popular books as that by Millis and by the broad publicity given to the Reports of the Nye Committee. I hope that historians who have studied a broader range of material will gradually give emphasis to the superficiality of such opinions.

University of Chicago QUINCY WRIGHT
July 7, 1936

AN AMUSING inaccuracy of detail occurs on page thirteen. Mr. Lansing never wore a frock coat until he went to Paris in 1918. This I happen to know because he never owned one until that time and when I told him that I was going to have a frock coat made for use in Paris, he told me that he had never owned one and did not propose to buy one. I was amused later to find that he had weakened for when I went to my tailor to have my coat tried on, it was a disastrous misfit. The tailor suddenly discovered, however, that he was by accident trying on me a coat he was making for Mr. Lansing.

I suppose one's attitude toward a man like Mr. Lansing is largely dictated by his own thoughts and sentiments on the problems which had to be faced. No friend of Mr. Lansing could complain that Mr. Riegel had been too unjust in his general description, but certainly I heartily dissent

from the conclusions and inferences which Mr. Riegel draws. Lansing was a man of most sensitive integrity. If he made any mistake, it was in committing to his postwar book the frank disclosures of the working of his mind. Such frankness is quite certain to be misunderstood and misrepresented, although no really thoughtful and informed mind could under the circumstances have avoided having exactly the same kind of thoughts which Mr. Lansing had. The amazing thing is that in spite of his traditional and philosophic prejudices in favor of the democratic theory and of our English inheritance, he nevertheless conducted his office with singular correctness and I think Mr. Riegel may be interested to examine the record on this subject from the German point of view. He will find that Von Bernstorff and the German Foreign Office not only applauded his complete fairness but welcomed some of his suggestions as being helpful and fair to Germany. As I have spent about all of my leisure for the last six months examining this question, I feel qualified to express a confident opinion about it.

Two comments seem to me justified. In the first place, there can be no such thing as a neutral diplomat. Any man who is intelligent enough to be a diplomat at all must be an informed and thinking person. The wider the range of his information and the more penetrating his thought, the more certain he is to have his own opinions upon great issues which affect the world. The most we have a right to expect is that when charged with official responsibility, the diplomat shall see that his opinions of this personal and intellectual sort do not mislead him into official actions which are partial and unneutral. It is impossible to examine the record without concluding that Mr. Lansing did that with amazing success.

The only other comment I will make is hinted at by Mr. Riegel himself to the effect that we must judge what Mr. Lansing did by the accepted standards of his time. I cannot, however, help feeling that after having thus cautioned himself, Mr. Riegel proceeds to judge Mr. Lansing by the profoundly confused postwar notions which have grown up in this country by reason of such books as Mr. Millis' *Road to War* and such propaganda as that of Senator Nye's committee. I have no means of knowing, and I do not think Mr. Riegel has, whether Americans have really changed very much from 1914-17 until now. Personally, I doubt it. If they have not, they are largely inclined to regard peace as a highly desirable thing and in times of peace to express great confidence in their own peaceful intentions and purposes. But in times of excitement and upon specific issues, the Americans are, I think, a warlike people disposed to insist upon national rights and extremely impatient of all suggestions which look to surrender even of unimportant rights. That there is a very great deal of pacifist declamation among us nowadays I of course recognize, but if any country set out to torpedo ships carrying Americans on the high seas in 1937, as

Germany did in 1917, I have not the least doubt that the temper of the country would be one of resistance and not one of consent or avoidance of trouble by a national discontinuance of the use of the high seas in the face of such a threat.

Cleveland, Ohio
July 13, 1936

NEWTON D. BAKER

IDENTITY OF S. B. GREENBERG

SINCE THE publication of my article "The Greenberg Manuscript and Hart Crane's Poetry," which appeared in the Summer issue of your magazine, I have succeeded in discovering the identity of the unknown poet whose work influenced several of Crane's important poems. I am sending you herewith such information as I have finally gathered in order that some of the speculations and questions raised in my essay may be answered more conclusively than has hitherto been possible.

First, however, I would like to correct one definite mistake of fact that I made in the essay. As an indication that Crane knew of the Greenberg MS as early as 1920, I stated that he had mentioned his own poem, "Emblems of Conduct," in a letter to Gorham Munson in May of that year. Since receiving a complete transcription of the Munson correspondence, by kindness of the Library of Ohio State University, I have been able to check over all the letters in detail, and find that I was mistaken in this.

It was during the winter of 1923-24 that Crane first read the Greenberg MS. He was living at that time with Slater Brown and Edward Nagle in Woodstock, New York, having escaped for a few months from the strenuous routine of writing advertising copy in New York City. During his visit there he passed many evenings in conversation with William Murrel Fisher, an art critic, who lived nearby. It was in the course of such an evening when the talk turned to literary curiosities that Mr. Fisher produced a large package of old cheap notebooks full of the strange poetic scribblings of Samuel B. Greenberg, a young Jewish invalid who had died about 1916. As the two men read over the difficult penciled script, which had puzzled and excited Mr. Fisher for so long, Crane became more and more excited. He seized upon certain lines and phrases, and striding up and down the room, repeated them over and over, calling his companion to witness their power and originality and beauty. The reading continued through the late evening until midnight, when Crane took his leave with the notebooks under his arm. His excitement in the discovery was immediately communicated to Gorham Munson in the letter of December 20,

1923. "This poet, Greenberg," he wrote, "whom Fisher nursed until he died of consumption at a Jewish hospital in NY was a Rimbaud in embryo. Did you ever see some of the hobbling yet really gorgeous attempts that boy made without any education or time except when he became confined to a cot? Fisher has shown me an amazing amount of material, some of which I am copying and will show you when I get back. No grammar, nor spelling, and scarcely any form, but a quality that is unspeakably eerie and the most convincing gusto. One little poem is as good as any of the consciously conceived 'Pierrots' of Laforgue."

Crane kept the notebooks for several months, evidently reading and rereading the poems and copying those he considered best. These copies, typewritten on yellow foolscap, made up the sheaf of poems which were sent to me from the Isle of Pines and led to the discovery of this curious influence. You will recall that in my essay I mentioned that the makeup of this MS was identical with the MS copies of "Voyages II," in which the Greenberg influence was apparent. The reason for this becomes clear now that it is known that Crane was copying the Greenberg MS during the same period—or shortly before it—in which he was working on his Voyage poem.

There is nothing of importance to add to what I wrote in the essay concerning the influence on Crane of these poems. The only question which may occur to you or your readers is that of why Crane never acknowledged the debt he owed in his "Emblems of Conduct" to the Greenberg MS. It would, of course, be absurd to suppose that he wished to conceal or repudiate this obligation in any way. He discussed the MS enthusiastically not only with Mr. Fisher, but also with Gorham Munson and Slater Brown. That he did not explicitly point out his direct borrowing in "Emblems of Conduct" can be construed only as an indication that he did not consider it of sufficient importance. Indeed, the influence of the Greenberg poetry upon his own work as a whole is actually very slight, however curious and suggestive it may be.

The information I have gathered concerning Greenberg as a person, however, may be of interest to you, especially since it clarifies to some extent the fantastic anomalies of his poetry. He was the younger son of a large and very poor Jewish family of New York City. The disease with which he suffered was a hereditary one and orphaned him, I believe, at an early age, leaving him as the charge of his older brothers. With their meagre funds they were unable to support him entirely and in consequence much of his short life was spent in institutions for the destitute tubercular, principally at Wards Island and the Montefiore House. It was in these places that he scribbled most of his poetry, more often than not under the influence of the fever that was slowly consuming him. It was here, too, that Mr. Fisher, who had met him through mutual friends of his brother,

came to visit him bringing with him the books and conversation to which Greenberg owed what little knowledge of poetry he had. His formal education was limited to what little instruction he received in the New York public schools during those periods when his health permitted his attendance. Mr. Fisher, from whom I learned these facts, was unable to tell me the exact year of his death; but it was probably in 1916, when he was about twenty-two or twenty-three years old, that the slow disease finally overcame him in one of the bleak rooms of the institution on Wards Island in the East River.

Of the large mass of poetry he had written during those few years only five notebooks were preserved, which after his death were delivered by his brother to Mr. Fisher, who seems to have been the only person at that time to have appreciated his genius. Surely it must be called genius when a boy ignorant of literature and isolated from the world by a disease which promised his early death, still persisted in creating from his spirit a poetry at once powerfully original and beautiful in certain passages. It seems a strange contrivance of fate that a few lines of the poetry, ridiculed in his own lifetime by fellow inmates as the rantings of "Greenberg the Nut," should today find a permanent place in American literature under the name of Hart Crane. It is to be hoped that some day the notebooks will find another admirer who will be able to carry still further the work commenced by Crane, and edit the poems for publication under the author's own name. They would constitute, I am sure, a worthy contribution, however slight and eccentric, to our literature.

PHILIP HORTON

Brookhaven, N. Y.
August 25, 1936

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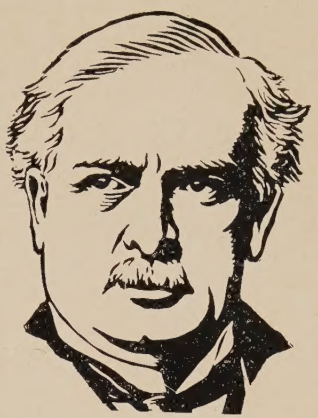

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